INSIDE: SPARKLING 8-PAGE FICTION SUPPLEMENT

# DON CAMILLO'S DILEMMA

*Week ending October 2 1954* *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

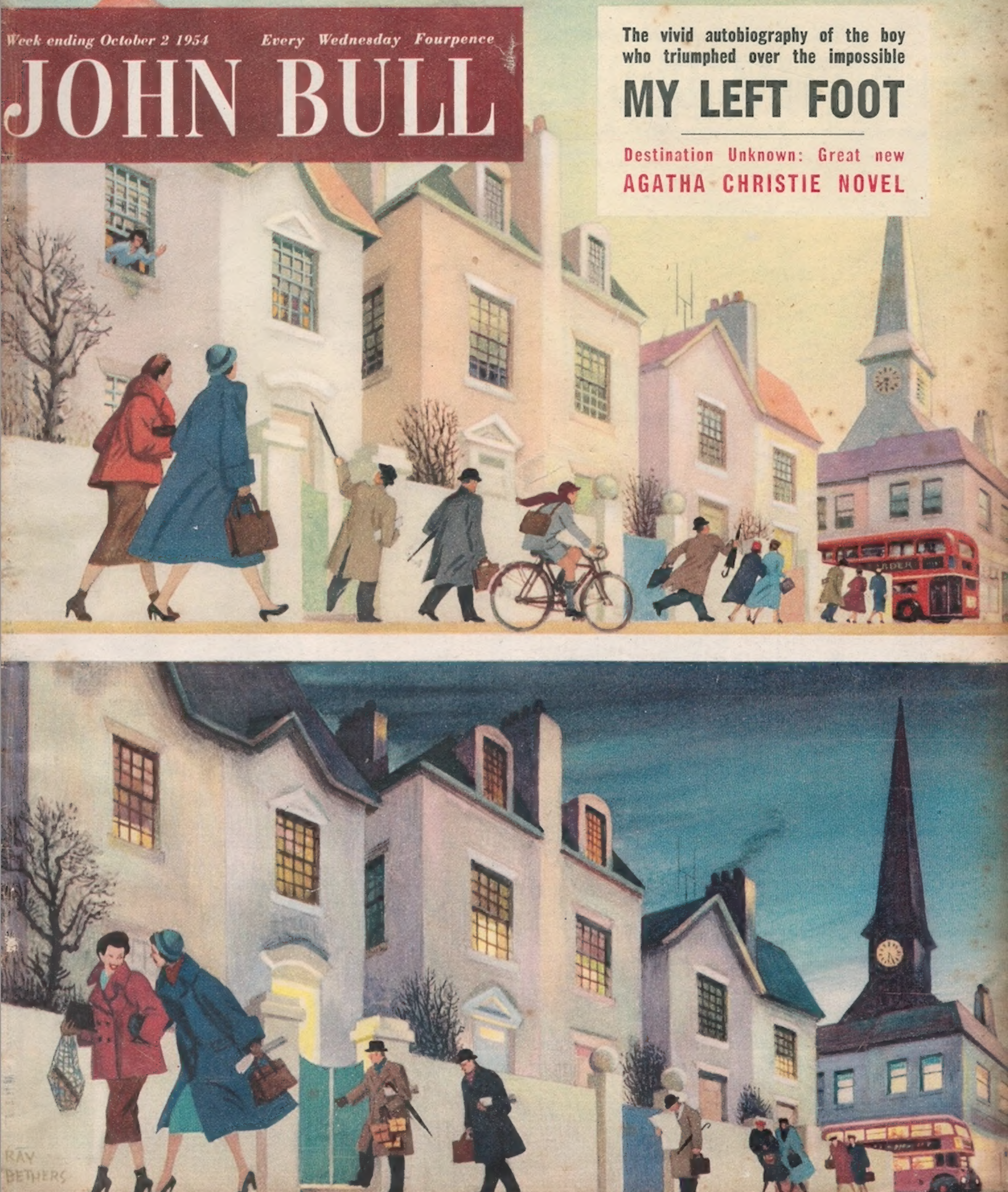
# JOHN BULL

The vivid autobiography of the boy who triumphed over the impossible

## MY LEFT FOOT

Destination Unknown: Great new

AGATHA CHRISTIE NOVEL



*Superb*

# EXTRA

*16-Page Detachable*

# KNITTING BOOKLET

## 64 BIG PAGES

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7—Red letter day for millions of women—the day WOMAN publishes one of its most exciting autumn issues.** Wonderful value—64 BIG PAGES, brilliant colour—and inside every copy a wonderful Winter Knitteds Booklet containing full instructions for ten beautiful and exclusive designs. . . . Two twin-sets, two jumpers, a lacy blouse, a man's pullover, a jumper for boy or girl, a carrying-cape for baby—**all in the knitting book of the year.**

*and the other treats in this issue . . .*

Hair beauty, two complete romances, the right way with fashion accessories, fascinating embroidery, "Wooden Spoon Club" chocolate eclairs.

**Place Your Order Now**

*Beginning a wonderful love story*

## Gertrude Lawrence as "Mrs. A."

**by her husband Richard Aldrich**

Fabulous, gay, sophisticated, a sparkling legend—the beloved "Gertie." But there was another Gertrude Lawrence—"Mrs. A," wife of Richard Aldrich. His glowing story of their wonderful marriage, of years rich in love and laughter, starts in this issue of WOMAN. This is a story to delight every man and woman who love each other . . . . You **must** read it.

# Woman

**OUT THURSDAY, 7th OCT.—4½d.**

**Just one capsule a day** —Taken regularly, Crookes Halibut Oil will help your children (and you!) to resist colds and 'flu. It is rich in 'protective' Vitamin A and 'sunshine' Vitamin D. From chemists only, 25 for 2/6, 100 for 8/6.

**CROOKES HALIBUT OIL**

## Fashion below the hemline

The shorter hemline—fashion's lastest decree brings the spotlight to your feet. The new Portland Autumn and Winter models have been styled with an eye on the minute hand of fashion—and are, of course, delightfully and immediately comfortable.

P8423
In Black.
Made also in Brown
Supolite Micro-Cellular
Sole and Heel.
60 Shape
Extra Wide Fitting
Price 65/-

Portland
STYLE - COMFORT
SHOES
In sizes and half-sizes 2-9

*Write for our latest booklet of styles and name of nearest Appointed Agent to:*
PORTLAND SHOES LTD. (Dept. 52), LEICESTER

EDITORIAL

# *Mrs. Byrne's kite*

WHEN Mrs. Marjorie Byrne, fifty-two year old advertising executive, bought an ironing table a few months ago, she was careful to choose one with a British Standards Institute number on it.

It denoted that the goods concerned were designed and made to the minimum standards laid down by the British Standards Institute.

Mrs. Byrne knows about B.S.I. numbers and its "kite"-mark seal of approval because she is a member of the B.S.I. Women's Advisory Committee; but she is realistic about how little other shoppers are conscious of it.

"ALTHOUGH the government and industry each contribute £110,000 a year to the B.S.I., and there are 'kite'-marks on hundreds of goods, from bedding to lamps, the public as a whole is just not aware of this guarantee of quality," she says.

MRS. BYRNE
*She looks for the symbol*

"This is a failure of publicity. But it is also a measure of the ineffectualness of the B.S.I."

In its fifty-three years of life, the Institute has scored some successes. That you can buy an electric lamp, confident that it will fit into all the holders at home, is mainly due to its efforts.

But there is much more to be done. Sheets professing to be single-bed size frequently turn out to be too short. "Colour-fast" towels often run in the wash. Not all tap washers fit all taps.

When the Utility scheme ended two and a half years ago, the cotton industry solemnly assured the B.S.I. that it would continue to market fifty numbered fabrics with fixed performances.

Since then, it has labelled only one fabric—ticking. And that was under pressure from bedding makers.

The B.S.I., however, has no power to press the cotton industry into protecting the consumer in this way.

NOW it is forming a new committee, a Consumer Advisory Council, which is to represent the customer. But, says Marjorie Byrne: "Like our Women's Committee, its main function will be to give the *appearance* of getting things done. In fact, the manufacturers can just laugh at our recommendations—and frequently do."

The public should insist on better goods. But it cannot act alone. The government must consider giving real power to the B.S.I.'s recommendations. Then Mrs. Byrne and the rest of the customers will be happier.

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..Keep well

IT is important that you should enjoy regular nights of restful sleep if you are to keep really fit and full of vitality. So, follow the example of countless thousands who make delicious 'Ovaltine' their bedtime beverage.

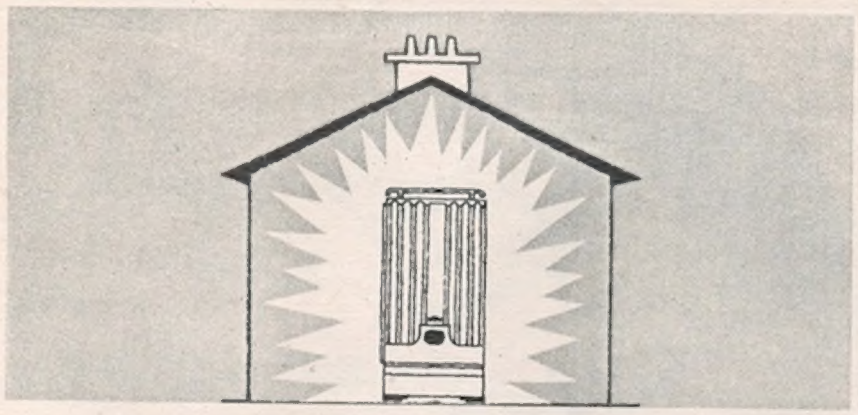
A cup of 'Ovaltine' last thing at night helps to relax nervous tensions and promote the conditions favourable to natural, refreshing sleep. Made from Nature's best foods and fortified with additional vitamins, 'Ovaltine' is easily digested and absorbed. During sleep, it assists in providing nourishment to rebuild strength and energy.

Try a cup of 'Ovaltine' tonight—and note the difference.

*Drink delicious*
**OVALTINE**
*The World's Best Nightcap*

*No other beverage can give you better sleep*
1/6, 2/6 *and* 4/6 *per tin*

P.947A



# Housewarming News

## No need to run short of paraffin this winter

IN THIS YEAR'S cold spells, when everyone else is rushing round trying to get extra fuel, *you* can have enough paraffin. You wouldn't let your coal supplies get down to the last shovelful before ordering more. Why not plan ahead the same way with paraffin ?

Here is an attractive, strongly built 5-gallon Aladdin Pink Paraffin drum, specially produced by Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd. You can buy it at the shop where you get your Pink Paraffin. With one or more of these in the house you need never be short of fuel this winter. But buy now, before they all go.

Do *you* use Aladdin Pink ? There's no finer paraffin. It gives safe and even heat without smoke or unpleasant smells.

# Pick PINK Paraffin

IDEAL FOR EVERY MAKE OF PARAFFIN-BURNING APPLIANCE

'Aladdin' and 'Pink' are joint registered trade-marks of Aladdin Industries Ltd. and Shell-Mex and B.P. Ltd.

Maw's **ARTHIGON**

DEEP PENETRATION CREAM

*for the positive relief of rheumatic pains*

FROM CHEMISTS ONLY




JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1
OCT. 2 1954 VOL. 96 NO. 2518 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

# FREE SPEECH

## This garage saved him pounds

WHILE in Canada on business, I bought a second-hand car. I had had it only a week or two when it broke down, and I took it to a garage to have it repaired.

It was quite a simple job, but they could not complete it inside a week and wanted a fabulous price for doing so.

I then heard of a garage nearby in Montreal where motorists could do their own repairs. I went there. For about a pound, I hired a repair bay, fully equipped with tools, for fourteen hours, and did the job myself.

The next day or two I spent cellulosing the car in the garage spraying and drying rooms—the owner was always at hand to advise—and when I had finished it looked like new. For a few pounds I had done work that might have cost me £75.

Unfortunately, I could not bring the car home. Import duties, I discovered, would have been too heavy. But I am now looking for a very old car—and an English garage where I can do my own repairs.—J. T. C., Worthing, Sussex.

### Roman Road?

MY hobby is collecting street names. Some years ago I started in a small way with Amen Corner, Tooting, but soon progressed to better things like Cold Bath Street, London, S.E.13, and World's End Passage, S.W.10. My latest acquisition is the only street in London beginning with an X. Even a taxi driver was baffled by it. In the East End there is a XX Place.—C. B., London, S.W.

*IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK*

RAINMAKERS
*by Keith Ellis*

**They make it rain to save parched crops, give cities water—or put out forest fires**

### Stronger Than Ox

FOUR of us were having a sherry in a hotel lounge the other day when we noticed what we thought was a very ancient brush hanging on the wall. The bar attendant did not know what it was, but said she would ask the proprietor. We got our answer from the waitress as she set down our soup. In quite a loud voice she said: "Elephant's tail." The surprise on the faces of the people at the next table was most amusing.—K. T. Acock, Somers Park Avenue, Malvern, Worcestershire.

### Off The Rails

FRENCH trains may be exceptionally fast and always on time (John Bull Editorial, September 4), but many crack "rapides" are first and second class only, and fares are high.

When I travelled third-class on the Strasbourg-Lille night express the other week, the third-class seats were of wood. Seven hours of this kind of travel would soon convince anyone of the superiority of British trains.

One last point: French railways are operating at a considerable financial loss, and are heavily subsidized by the State.—L. Mason Bell, Beech Avenue, Gatley, Cheadle, Cheshire.

*French Railways have shown a loss. But they have not been allowed to alter their fares or freight charges sufficiently to offset this.*

### Two-faced Tower

ON holiday recently, I saw the strange church tower shown in my photograph. It is at Harwell, Berkshire, the village made famous by the atomic research station. On the thirteenth-century tower are two clocks, one of which has only one hand. I was told that when it was decided to fit a new clock into the tower, antiquarians considered the

one-handed clock so curious that it was agreed to preserve it. In the tower now are not only two dials, but two sets of works side by side.—T. R. Robinson, Upper Cranbrook Road, Redland, Bristol.

### Rate Of Exchange

IT may be surprising how little we paid for things before the war ("Free Speech," September 4), but people often overlook the low level of wages then when making such comparisons.

In 1938, as a secretary, I earned thirty-five shillings a week, and the junior shorthand-typist in our office had a starting wage of five shillings.

Today, the girl who took over my job is getting £6 10s., and the junior starts at £2.—Mrs. J. Phillips, Delph, Brierley Hill, Staffordshire.

*In 1938, the average wage of a miner was £2 15s. 9d., compared with £11 2s. 3d. today. Schoolteachers earning £180 a year then would receive £450 now, and qualified bank clerks £340 against £660.*

### Housewife's Choice

AN Indian friend arrived in this country a few weeks ago from Singapore, where she has been living for five years. I asked her what present she would take back to remind her of England ("Free Speech," September 4). She said she would choose a mop. It would always remind her of English women because, in her part of the world, only servants use mops.—Mrs. D. M. Doyle, Grimshaw Lane, Ormskirk, Lancs.

. . . My young daughter and I have just spent six weeks in England. As a gift, my daughter received a nursery clock; on it are depicted English nursery tales. Its ticking is a constant reminder of England. I received a plaque on which is a wonderful drawing of St. Paul's Cathedral, and a paper knife showing "The Old Curiosity Shop" on its handle. But I hope that your reader gave her

*Continued on page 6*

# Persil for Coloureds, too!

How's that for gay, crisp coloured cottons! As fresh and bright as new! They've been washed in Persil, that's why.

Millions know that Persil can't be beaten for the white wash. But not everyone realizes it's just as wonderful and safe for coloureds, too! Persil's secret is *cleanness*. Yes, whites, coloureds, woollies, or fine things — Persil gets out every scrap of dirt. And does it so gently!

**Gentle, too, for hands and nails**

Another blessing of Persil is that it's so very kind to hands and nails — you can *feel* it is!

**Pay 500 Gns. for a pedigree Show Jumper — and then neglect it?**

Of course not! Constant care is what tells in a thoroughbred's favour. Strong, flexed muscles, high stamina and lustrous coat reveal correct feeding and wise grooming. Similarly, thoroughbred shoes repay regular care with the pedigree polish. Cherry Blossom feeds and fortifies the leather, thanks to its superfine waxes, oils and dyes. Swiftly gives an enduring high gloss and shoes keep supple.

**The price is in your favour**

**4½d. and 6½d.**

Tonette, Light Brown, Ox-blood, White, Black. Also Dark Tan (6½d. size only)

*Keep your brown shoes in tip-top condition with*

CHERRY BLOSSOM SHOE POLISH

THE PEDIGREE POLISH

**Dark brown shoes need Tonette or Dark Tan**

You can always tell a NIVEA family!

*THEY KNOW . . .*

**skin needs NIVEA**

*it's as simple as that!*

ON238


## FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

friends a sprig of mint to plant in their garden. Mint is so rare out of Britain. — LILIAN M. NEILSEN, Bjergby, Spentrup, Denmark.

### *Like Hot Cakes*

WHILE I was visiting Singapore a short time ago, I took this photograph of an ice seller. In his hand he has a carpenter's plane, which he uses to make ice shavings from an enormous block of ice. He gathers the shavings in his hand, fashions them

into a hard snowball, on which he pours some liquid colouring. These snowball ices are a great favourite with the children.—LESLIE J. CLARKE, Chipstead Lane, Lower Kingswood, Tadworth, Surrey.

### *Jam Tomorrow*

THE happy small boy in new wellingtons in Fancett's cover painting (JOHN BULL, September 11) reminded me of an incident when I bought my little daughter her first pair. She immediately wanted to go out to play in them, even though it was quite a hot day. I told her that the boots were for her to wear when it was raining and there were puddles underfoot. She replied: "Yes, but when we get a day like that, you won't let me go out to play."—MRS. G. E. CROWHURST, Nippon Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon.

### *Winning Business*

IN Northern Ireland it is possible to place a ready-money bet almost at any time ("Consider Your Verdict," September 11). Betting shops operate all over the country, and no one seems to stop them. When making a bet, the backer receives a docket giving details of the transaction. It often happens that a person is brought to trial for attempting to defraud the bookmaker by altering one of these dockets to show a bigger stake. This seems strange if the transaction is, in fact, illegal.—JAMES S. BILLING, Columbia Street, Belfast.

*Ready-money betting in Northern Ireland is illegal. Operators are fined from time to time, but no other attempt is made to close their shops. A man who defrauds a bookmaker—or a bookmaker who cheats a client—is liable to punishment by a court.*

### *No Children*

A FRIEND of mine has three children, the eldest of whom has been in hospital for nine weeks. The hospital will not allow children under fourteen to visit patients, so when my friend and her husband visit their daughter, the two other children have to wait in the car outside.

I heard recently of a twelve-year-old boy who fretted for his mother. She had been in hospital for six months, and he was not allowed to visit her. Eventually he ran away from home and went five miles to the hospital to try to see her.—E. S., Manchester.

*Some hospitals allow children under fourteen to visit patients. Where they are barred it is often because it is thought undesirable to expose healthy children to possible contact with disease, or because the presence of too many young children in a ward might have a disturbing effect on other patients.*

### *The New V.I.P.s*

WHEN a friend took his small son and daughter to London for the first time, they insisted on seeing the Changing of the Guard. He took them to the Horse Guards in Whitehall, to find that hundreds of people were already there. A policewoman arrived, and escorted the youngsters to the front. Of course, they were delighted. Then they saw that other policewomen were collecting children from the crowd and lining them up in the front row.—DOROTHY STEAD, Occupation Lane, Pudsey, Yorkshire.

### *Half Measures*

I WAS amused to read of the shop assistant who refused to sell cloth by the foot ("Free Speech," September 11). Outside a garage recently, I saw a board announcing: "Paraffin —3d. pint; 5d. quart; 1s. 6d. a gallon." I wanted a quart, and took

along two pint bottles. The attendant tried to charge me sixpence—for two pints. I had great difficulty in convincing him that two pints are, in fact, a quart.—R. ROBINSON, Abbey View Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire.

### *Log of Disaster*

IT was with particular interest that I read J. Lennox Kerr's account of "The Great Storm" and the sinking of the Princess Victoria. On the day the ferry was in distress I compiled a log of radio signals I picked up from

*Continued on page 8*

## THIS WEEK'S COVER

"WOP to the office and blooey home to bed," wrote the American poet Ogden Nash. Another American, artist Ray Bethers, pictures London's version—"not so very different from New York, where I studied." He made the sketches for this week's cover in St. John's Wood. Once the homes of eminent writers and artists —George Eliot, Herbert Spencer, Landseer, Dame Laura Knight—many of these Victorian houses have decayed and are now being demolished to make way for spacious new schools, gardens and flats. A far cry from the real woods owned by the Hospitallers of St. John, which later harboured conspirators against the first Elizabeth.

# Our happy family shoe shop

*– where we can AFFORD to choose!*

Burlington ★ FOR ME

Shoes for all the family! What a delight it is to find one store where we can shop economically for the whole family. Dad, mother, the youngsters – Freeman Hardy and Willis will fit them all with their favourite shoe at maker-to-wearer prices.

Classic ★ FOR ME

**39/9**

B.2742.
Tailored polished Box Oxford with a row of punching across the toe cap. A medium shaped toe, roomy, full-fitting joint and sturdy leather sole spell comfort.
Sizes 6-11, 6½-9½.

**39/9**

CX.6802.
A compliment to your good taste. Black leather court shoe with fancy punching and trimmed cuban heel. Also in Brown or Blue. In sizes and half sizes from 3 to 8.

Hurly Burly ★ FOR ME

D.4031.
To keep pace with active feet, this plain Oxford shoe is made of high grade upper leather with stout leather soles. The extended heel gives additional support. Made on nature-form lasts in 3 fittings. Available in Tan or Black.
Sizes 7-10 21/9 11-1 25/9 2-5 27/9 6-7 29/9.

FROM **21/9**

★ REGD. BRAND NAME

# FREEMAN HARDY & WILLIS

VISIT YOUR LOCAL BRANCH – or if unable to do so, order by post stating style, size, colour and enclose remittance plus 1/- postage to F. H. W. Walnut Street, Leicester.



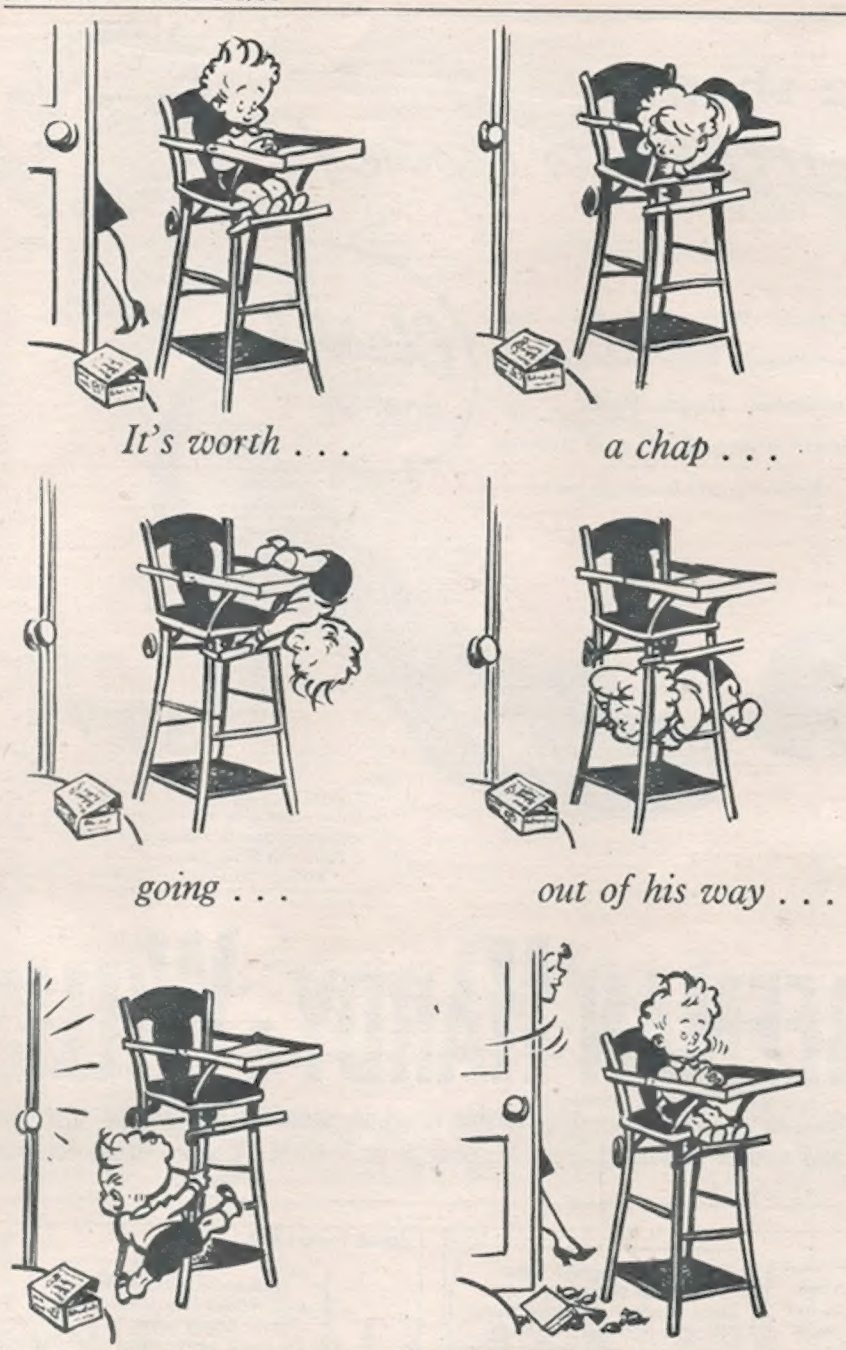
# 1-2-X began it all!

1-2-X-2-X-1... I'm too **tired** to fiddle around with these pools any longer. Proper browned-off!
Joe, you're **always** tired these days. See the doctor!

...go to bed early, Doc, but the longer I sleep... the tireder I get!
If only more people knew that long sleep's not so important as **relaxed** sleep! There's nothing seriously wrong with **you**, for instance, but you're probably only resting your **body** while you sleep. Your nerves and brain obviously aren't rested enough. Try Horlicks every night. It'll help you to get **relaxed** sleep
SO HORLICKS EVERY NIGHT

SOME TIME LATER
Well, we've saved fifty quid from my wages now, Florrie. D'you want TV? Or shall we try that idea I had?
Let's go after **your** scheme, Joe... I'm sure you'll make a success of it!

SUMMER
We hatch 'em... Grow 'em... Fry 'em... you eat 'em
FRIED CHICKEN
Nice leg, please. Smart idea, this!
(THINKS) A roaring trade! No tiredness now – thanks to Horlicks!
HORLICKS




**Everyone loves –**

Such luscious flavours—with the real taste of lovely, juicy fruit! You'll also love
**SILMOS BARLIES—SILMOS MINTS**
—all made by Batger's,
famous for over 200 years!

*They're* **Batger's** *— sweets ahead of the rest!*


## FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

her and other vessels. It includes these entries:

*13.40:* Princess Victoria sends S O S. Preparing to abandon ship.
*14.46:* Cargo ship Orchy calls that she is amid wreckage and lifebuoys. Sights rafts with survivors.
*16.23:* Donaghadee lifeboat reports having forty survivors aboard. Has distributed rum.
*16.38:* Message from survivors says that there were eight women and one child aboard Princess Victoria.

Our house overlooks Belfast Lough, and we were able to see rescue ships going out. Had the weather been clearer we might have seen the Princess Victoria, but at times we had difficulty in seeing even the sea. —J. T. BARNES, Crawfordeburn Road, Bangor, Co. Down.

### Builder's Benefit

CELEBRATIONS to mark the laying of a building's foundations ("Free Speech," September 11) used to be held in England as well as Scotland. I spent fifty-seven years in the building trade, and it was once the custom to give a little refreshment to the workers when the foundations were down. When the roof was completed, a flag was hoisted, and there were more refreshments.

I remember when we were renovating Greatford Hall, Lincolnshire, we were given a dinner by the new owner, to which wives were invited. Later, there was a tea, a sports meeting—and a day off with pay for every man.

Often, owners of large buildings on which we were working would book dinner for us at a nearby hotel, ending the evening with a smoking concert.—C. W. ROBINSON, Recreation Road, Bourne, Lincolnshire.

### Magic Carpet

A FEW weeks ago I bought a new carpet, and strange things have been happening in my lounge. A woollen hearthrug, backed with Italian cloth, now moves about six or eight inches

every day, and always in the same direction. I thought this must be due to vibration caused by people walking past it, so I locked the door. But still the rug moves—and more so when I have a fire in the room.—MRS. L. K. MOORE, Shepreth, Royston, Herts.

*This is an inherent feature of all pile carpets, and is almost impossible to cure. The pile lies in one direction, to which it returns after being disturbed, carrying with it anything it can move. But there must be some disturbance of the carpet's pile to cause this movement, and heat has no effect on it.*

### Hungry Forties?

SOME of the items listed on an old grocer's bill I have found make an interesting comparison with the pre-war prices published recently ("Free Speech," September 4). The bill is dated January 8, 1841. Included in it are: 4¼ lb. of bacon, 3s. 6½d.; one grouse, 4s.; 1 lb. almonds, 2½d.; herrings, 1d. each; one pheasant, 3s. 6d.; 2 lb. figs, 2s.; 14 lb. ham, 10s. 6d.; 1 lb. muscatels, 1s.—P. B. PEILE, Egg Buckland Road, Plymouth.

### Time, Gentlemen

ON holiday in the Isle of Man this summer, I saw the most wonderful collection of clocks and watches in the bar of a Douglas hotel. I was told that the landlord, Mr. J. H. Tulloch, has been collecting them

since he was a boy, and now has more than two hundred. It takes him three and a half hours to wind them up.—J. T. B., Portland Road, South Norwood, London, S.E.25.

*Mr. Tulloch, seen in our photograph at the bar of the Shakespeare Hotel, Douglas, has clocks dating back to Elizabethan times. One of his pocket watches tells the day, date, moon phase, and the time in New York, Leningrad, Calcutta, Melbourne, Vienna, Berlin and Paris.*

### It's An Order

AN order from Whitehall has forced the Mersey ferry boats to take on a new look. They now have two masts. A few months ago a regulation went out compelling all vessels of 150 ft. and over to carry two masthead lights. The Mersey ferries are a few inches over this measurement, but, despite protests, the order was not relaxed.

Since the Mersey Tunnel was opened, the ferries have not had too busy a time. Yet an extra mast—each costing £300—had to be fitted to eight steamers. One wonders why. — FRANK MARRIOTT, Elm Road North, Prenton, Birkenhead.

*The order was made following the recommendation of an international conference on the prevention of collisions at sea.*

### Workers' Harvest

SCOTTISH farmworkers who were paid every six months ("Free Speech," September 11) were twice as well off as Welsh farm labourers of years ago. Many of them were paid only once a year, and then often in kind. Farm servants, too, were paid in this way, a maid receiving £2 a year and a flannel apron, and a man a year's wages plus a lamb.

Paupers received no monetary help, but were dressed by the parish. They were made to wear an armlet of red flannel bearing brass initials of the parish and the letter "P." — KEN ETHERIDGE, College Street, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire.

**John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service**

**IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK**

## THE MAN WHO MADE A MILLION POUNDS

*A powerful story by Jacob Hay*

*Tulips, Daffodils and Hyacinths*
*bring gaiety, fragrance and beauty*
*into your house and garden.*
*Plant now for Spring. Buy the best bulbs*
*and ask your seedsman for advice*
*on the best way to grow them.*

*Advertisement*

# At the back of all our minds

IS THERE ANYTHING we can do to prepare for the worst—an H-bomb attack? Yes, there is.

However complete and extensive the destruction in the central area, there would still be a great ring around it only partly destroyed, with fires raging. And that is where there would be thousands of lives to be saved.

It is the people outside the target area who would have to fight the fires, rescue the trapped and injured, feed and shelter the homeless. *If they knew how.*

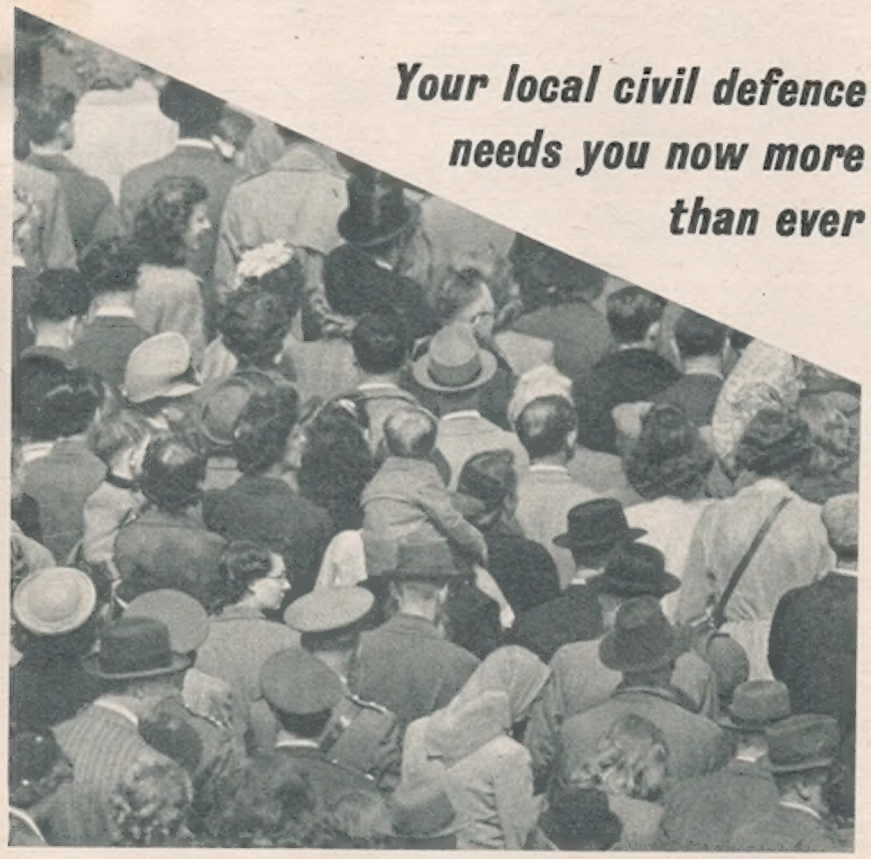
Half a million people realise this. They are training in the civil defence services, and because of them, if war ever does come, thousands who might have died will live.

We are all thankful that for the present the threat of war has receded. But an organisation whipped together in a crisis would not be much good.

***THE TIME TO TRAIN IS NOW!***

Your local Civil Defence Corps and Auxiliary Fire Service are the first line of civil defence. They need thousands more volunteers. Ask at your council offices.

The more men and women who train now, the fewer will die if war should come.



***Your local civil defence needs you now more than ever***

Issued by H.M. Government

## How to keep your hair handsome all day

It takes only 20 seconds a day to massage your hair with 'Vaseline' Brand Hair Tonic, but what a world of difference! With Dry Scalp checked, your hair looks naturally healthy, stays well-groomed all day. 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic costs only 2/6, or double the quantity at 3/9.

Dry, unmanageable, scruffy hair? Hair that looks untidy? Your trouble may be Dry Scalp. Start today to check Dry Scalp this sure and simple way:

Every morning, gently massage in a few drops of 'Vaseline' Hair Tonic for 20 seconds to supplement the natural scalp oils. Hair soon looks glossy, smart.

**THE DRESSING THAT CHECKS DRY SCALP**

**Vaseline*** HAIR TONIC

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*For warmth without weight see that your Raincoat is*

**TROPALINED**

# MY LEFT FOOT

## *by CHRISTY BROWN*

*Christy Brown and his mother at their home in Dublin*

**This story is written by a young man born so paralysed that it seemed that he would never walk, use his hands or speak. It tells of his mother's faith and of his lifelong fight against affliction—a fight that began on the miraculous day he wrote the letter "A" *with his left foot***

I WAS BORN in the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, on June 5, 1932. There were nine children before me and twelve after me, so I myself belong to the middle group. Out of this total of twenty-two, seventeen lived, four died in infancy, leaving thirteen still to hold the family fort.

Mine was a difficult birth, I am told. Both mother and son almost died. A whole army of relatives queued up outside the hospital until the small hours of the morning, waiting for news and praying furiously that it would be good. After my birth, Mother was sent to recuperate for some weeks and I was kept in the hospital while she was away. I remained there for some time, without name, for I wasn't baptized until my mother was well enough to bring me to church.

It was Mother who first saw that there was something wrong with me. I was about four months old at the time. She noticed that my head had a habit of falling backwards whenever she tried to feed me. She attempted to correct this by placing her hand on the back of my neck to keep it steady. But when she took it away, back it would drop again. That was the first warning sign.

As I got older she became aware of other defects. She saw that my hands were clenched nearly all of the time and were inclined to twine behind my back; my mouth couldn't grasp the teat of the bottle because even at that early age my jaws would either lock together tightly, so that it was impossible for her to open them, or they would suddenly become limp and fall loose, dragging my whole mouth to one side. At six months I could not sit up without having a mountain of pillows around me; at twelve months it was the same.

Very worried by this, Mother told my father her fears, and they decided to seek medical advice without any further delay. I was a little over a year old when they began to take me to hospitals and clinics, convinced that there was something definitely wrong with me, something which they could not understand or name, but which was very real and disturbing.

Almost every doctor who saw and examined me, labelled me a very interesting but also a hopeless case. Mother was told very

Christy Brown's parents and some of the family—"a family that loved me and hoped for me and made me a part of their own warmth and humanity." Christy was the tenth child of twenty-two, of whom only thirteen now live

Left to right: Tony, Peter, Jim decided he wanted to swim like

gently that I was mentally defective and would remain so. That was a hard blow to a young mother who had already reared five healthy children. The doctors were so very sure of themselves that Mother's faith in me seemed almost an impertinence. They assured her that nothing could be done for me.

She refused to accept this truth, the inevitable truth—as it then seemed—that I was beyond cure, beyond saving, even beyond hope. She could not and would not believe that I was an imbecile, as the doctors told her. She had nothing in the world to go by, not a scrap of evidence to support her conviction that, though my body was crippled, my mind was not. In spite of all that the doctors and specialists told her, she would not agree. I don't believe she knew why—she just knew without feeling the smallest shade of doubt.

Finding that the doctors could not help in any way beyond telling her not to place her trust in me, or, in other words, to forget I was a human creature, and to regard me as just something to be fed and washed and then put away again, Mother decided there and then to take matters into her own hands. I was *her* child, and therefore part of the family. No matter how dull and incapable I might grow up to be, she was determined to treat me on the same plane as the others, and not as the "queer one" in the back room who was never spoken of when there were visitors present.

That was a momentous decision as far as my future life was concerned. It meant that I would always have my mother on my side to help me fight all the battles that were to come, and to inspire me with new strength when I was almost beaten. But it wasn't easy for her because now the relatives and friends had decided otherwise. They contended that I should be taken kindly, sympathetically, but not seriously. That would be a mistake. "For your own sake," they told her, "don't look to this boy as you would to the others; it would only break your heart in the end."

### As Helpless As A Baby

Luckily for me, Mother and Father held out against the lot of them. But Mother wasn't content just to say that I was not an idiot, she set out to prove it, not because of any rigid sense of duty, but out of love. That is why she was so successful.

At this time she had the five other children to look after besides the "difficult one," though as yet it was not by any means a full house. There were my brothers, Jim, Tony and Paddy, and my two sisters, Lily and Mona, all of them very young, just a year or so between each, so that they were almost exactly like steps of stairs.

Four years rolled by and I was now five, and still as helpless as a newly born baby. While my father was out at bricklaying, earning our bread and butter for us, Mother was slowly, patiently pulling down the wall, brick by brick, that seemed to thrust itself between me and the other children, slowly, patiently penetrating beyond the thick curtain that hung over my mind, separating it from theirs. It was hard, heart-breaking work, for often all she got from me in return was a vague smile and perhaps a faint gurgle.

I could not speak or even mumble, nor could I sit up without support on my own, let alone take steps. But I wasn't inert or motionless. I seemed indeed to be convulsed with movement, wild, stiff, snake-like movement that never left me, except in sleep. My fingers twisted and twitched continually, my arms twined backwards and would often shoot out suddenly this way and that, and my head lolled and sagged sideways. I was a queer, crooked little fellow.

Mother tells me how one day she had been sitting with me for hours in an upstairs room, showing me pictures out of a big story book that I had got from Santa Claus at Christmas and telling me the names of the different animals and flowers that were in them, trying without success to get me to repeat them. This had gone on for hours while she talked and laughed with me. Then at the end of it she leaned over me and said gently into my ear: "Did you like it, Chris? Did you like the bears and the monkeys and all the lovely flowers? Nod your head for yes, like a good boy."

But I could make no sign that I had understood her. Her face was bent over mine, hopefully. Suddenly, involuntarily, my queer hand reached up and grasped one of the dark curls

and Christy Brown. In this canal Christy—then eight—daringly his brothers. He almost drowned—until he lashed out and floated

# The boy who rode pick-a-back

*The following introduction to "My Left Foot" is written by Robert Collis, M.D., F.R.C.P.I., who is treating Christy Brown for cerebral palsy*

MANY YEARS AGO, as I watched a crowd of children stream out of a cinema after a special charity show, I saw a strange-looking little boy perched on the shoulders of a much bigger and stronger boy.

The "horse" was broad-shouldered, and his lips were twisted in a funny smile of confidence, strength and friendliness. The rider's legs were twined round him, his arms and legs held stiff in an odd way. What has remained most clearly in my mind was the rider's pale young face and the eyes that seemed to shine out with vitality from it. I asked who the boy was, and was told he was called Christy Brown and that he had been almost completely paralysed from birth.

Cerebral palsy—Christy's affliction—is a term which covers a number of conditions due to brain injury, usually occurring during birth or shortly afterwards. If the middle part of the brain is affected, the child will show all sorts of abnormal writhing movements. This variety is called athetosis, and Christy Brown's was a severe case.

Except for his left leg and foot he was completely unable to control movement of any kind. One result was that for a long time he was unable to make his speech understood except to his immediate family, who came to understand his queer grunts and noises as one may a foreign language. He was so "paralysed" that if it had not been for the tremendous persistence of his extraordinary mother he would probably have been shut away in a home for mentally defective children.

Years passed, but I never forgot the sight of that boy, When, five years ago, at the promptings of my sister-in-law, Eirene Collis, I set up a clinic in Dublin for the new treatment of cerebral palsy, which she had introduced into Europe from America, I thought of him at once and sought him out.

After a search I found where he lived. I knocked. A short, stoutish, round-faced, smiling woman in her forties opened the door and led me into the kitchen-living-room, which was filled to overflowing with numberless children of all ages. In a big chair by the fire, propped up, sat the crippled boy I had come to seek.

Much has passed between us in the intervening years, but I will not anticipate here the story, which he tells so well, of how he began his treatment for cerebral palsy, or how he learned to write.

I am an author myself, and in a sense, I suppose, I may claim to have taught him to write. This work, however, is in no way mine. Sitting alone, cut off in his little room, he "thought it out" himself, developing in a very short time a simple style of his own.

This work seems to me of universal importance. Seldom, except in the great story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan, has a crippled, blind or deaf person been so gifted that he was able to lift the curtain that hangs around the lives of so many of our less fortunate brothers and sisters and let us see within. Never, I think, has one read an account of a life so completely different from the normal which has been written with such craftsmanship that one can actually feel what the writer felt himself.

For me the whole experience has been an extraordinary revelation, and a proof of the amazing power of the spirit of man to overcome the impossible and, perhaps most of all, of the utmost need of the human soul to escape from every sort of prison.

that fell in a thick cluster about her neck. Gently, she loosened the clenched fingers, though some dark strands were still clutched between them.

Then she turned away from my curious stare and left the room, crying. The door closed behind her. It all seemed hopeless. It looked as though there was some justification for my relatives' contention that I was an idiot and beyond help.

They now spoke of an institution.

"Never!", said my mother almost fiercely, when this was suggested to her. "I know my boy is not an idiot. It is his body that is shattered, not his mind. I'm sure of that."

Sure? Yet, inwardly, she prayed that God would give her some proof of her faith. She knew it was one thing to believe but quite another thing to prove.

## Behind A Glass Wall

Although I was five, I still gave no real sign of intelligence. I showed no apparent interest in things except my toes—more especially those of my left foot. Although my natural habits were clean I could not aid myself, but in this respect my father took care of me. I used to lie on my back all the time in the kitchen or, on bright warm days, out in the garden, a little bundle of crooked muscles and twisted nerves, surrounded by a family that loved me and hoped for me and made me part of their own warmth and humanity. I was lonely, imprisoned in a world of my own, unable to communicate with others, cut off from them as though a glass wall stood between my existence and theirs. I longed to run about and play with the rest, but I was unable to break loose from my bondage.

Then, suddenly, it happened! In a moment everything was changed, my future life moulded into a definite shape, my mother's faith in me rewarded and her secret fear changed into open triumph.

It happened so quickly, so simply after all the years of waiting and uncertainty that I can see and feel the whole scene as if it had happened last week. It was the afternoon of a cold, grey December day. The streets outside glistened with snow; the white, sparkling flakes stuck and melted on the window-panes and hung on the boughs of the trees like molten silver. The wind howled dismally, whipping up little whirling columns of snow that rose and fell at every fresh gust. Over all, the dull, murky sky stretched like a dark canopy, a vast infinity of greyness.

Inside, all the family was gathered round the big kitchen fire that lit up the little room with a warm glow and made giant shadows dance on the walls and ceiling. In a corner Mona and Paddy were sitting huddled together, a few torn school primers before them. They were writing down little sums on to an old chipped slate, using a piece of bright yellow chalk. I was close to them, propped up by a few pillows against the wall, watching.

It was the chalk that attracted me. It was a long slender stick of vivid yellow. I had never seen anything like it before, and it showed up so well against the black surface of the slate that I was fascinated by it as much as if it had been a stick of gold.

Suddenly, I wanted desperately to do what my sister was doing. Then, without thinking or knowing exactly what I was doing, I reached out and took the stick of chalk from my sister's hand—*with my left foot.*

## The Scribble On A Slate

I do not know why I used my left foot to do this. It is a puzzle to many people as well as to myself, for, although I had displayed a curious interest in my toes at an early age, I had never attempted before this to use either of my feet in any way. They could have been as useless to me as were my hands. That day, however, my left foot, apparently on its own volition, reached out and very impolitely took the chalk out of my sister's hand.

I held it tightly between my toes, and, acting on an impulse, made a wild sort of scribble with it on the slate. Next moment I stopped, a bit dazed, surprised, looking down at the stick of yellow chalk stuck between my toes, not knowing what to do with it next, hardly knowing how it got there. Then I looked up and became aware that everyone had stopped talking and was staring at me silently. Nobody stirred. Mona, her black curls framing her chubby little face, stared at me with great big eyes and open

Christy Brown—now an uncle many times over—raises a smile from sister Mona's baby while Mrs. Brown looks on. The photograph was taken in Christy's room at his parents' Dublin home

mouth. Across the open hearth, his face lit by flames, sat my father, leaning forward, hands outspread on his knees, his shoulders tense. I felt the sweat break out on my forehead.

My mother came in from the pantry with a steaming pot in her hand. She stopped midway between the table and the fire, feeling the tension flowing through the room. She followed their stare and saw me in the corner. Her eyes looked from my face down to my foot, with the chalk gripped between my toes. She put down the pot.

Then she crossed over to me and knelt down beside me, as she had done so many times before. "I'll show you what to do with it, Chris," she said, very slowly and in a queer, jerky way, her face flushed as if with some inner excitement.

Taking another piece of chalk from Mona, she hesitated, then very deliberately drew, on the floor in front of me, *the single letter "A."*

"Copy that," she said, looking steadily at me. "Copy it, Christy."

I couldn't.

I looked about me, looked round at the faces that were turned towards me—tense, excited faces that were at that moment frozen, immobile, eager, waiting for a miracle in their midst. The stillness was profound. I could hear the sound of the water tap dripping in the pantry, the loud ticking of the clock on the mantelshelf, and the soft hiss and crackle of the logs on the open hearth.

### Try, Try, Try Again

I tried again. I put out my foot and made a wild jerking stab with the chalk which produced a very crooked line and nothing more.

"Try again, Chris," my mother whispered in my ear.

I did. I stiffened my body and put my left foot out again, for the third time. I drew one side of the letter. I drew half the other side. Then the stick of chalk broke and I was left with a stump. I wanted to fling it away and give up. Then I felt my mother's hand on my shoulder. I tried once more.

Out went my foot. I shook, I sweated and strained every muscle. My hands were so tightly clenched that my fingernails bit into the flesh. I set my teeth so hard that I nearly pierced my lower lip. Everything in the room swam till the faces around me were mere patches of white. But—I drew it—*the letter "A."*

There it was on the floor before me. Shaky, with awkward, wobbly sides and a very uneven centre line. But it *was* the letter "A." I looked up. I saw my mother's face for a moment, tears on her cheeks. Then my father stooped down and hoisted me on to his shoulder.

### Road To A New World

I had done it! It had started—the thing that was to give my mind its chance of expressing itself. True, I couldn't speak with my lips, but now I would speak through something more lasting than spoken words—written words. That one letter, scrawled on the floor with a broken bit of yellow chalk gripped between my toes, was my road to a new world, my key to mental freedom. It was to provide a source of relaxation to the tense, taut thing that was me which panted for expression behind a twisted mouth.

Having taught me to draw the letter "A" with my foot, Mother next set out to teach me the whole alphabet in much the same way. She was determined to make use of the opportunity so miraculously presented to her and to help me communicate with the rest through the written word, if not through the spoken one.

My memory of the way she set about this is quite clear. She would bring me up into the front bedroom any day she wasn't too busy with the household, and spend hours teaching me one letter after the other. She would write down each letter on the floor with a piece of chalk. Then she would rub them out with a duster and make me write them down again from memory with the chalk held between my toes.

It was hard work for both of us. Often she would be in the pantry cooking dinner when I'd give a howl to make her come up to see if I had spelled a word correctly. If I was wrong, I'd make her kneel down, her hands covered with flour, and show me the right way to do it.

I remember the first thing I learned to write was my initials, "C.B.," though I'd often become confused and put the "B" before the "C." When ever anyone asked me what my name was I'd grab a piece of chalk and write "C.B." with a great flourish. Soon afterwards I learned to write my full name instead of just two initials. I was tremendously proud of myself when I could do this. I felt quite important.

I was now going on six, and soon I got tired of just writing my own name. I wanted to do something else—something bigger. But I couldn't because I couldn't read. I didn't exactly know what being able to read meant. I just knew that Jim could do it, Tony could do it, Mona and Peter could do it, and that made me want to do it, too.

Slowly, very painfully, I ploughed through the whole twenty-six letters with my mother and gradually mastered each of them in turn. One thing that gave Mother great encouragement was my ability to listen and watch attentively when she was sitting by my side giving me lessons. My attention seldom wavered.

### Tales By The Fireside

I remember us sitting in the big horse-haired armchair before a big fire one winter's evening. The baby was asleep in the pram on the other side of the hearthstone. The two of us were alone in the dim-lit kitchen, while my father was at a bricklayers' meeting and my sisters and brothers were playing on the streets. My mother had Peter's schoolbook in her hand and she was reading little stories about the poor children of Lir who were turned into swans by their wicked stepmother, about Diarmud and Grane and the King who turned everything he touched into gold. She read on to me till the shadows had made the room dark and little Eamonn stirred and cried in his sleep. Then she got up and switched on the lights. The spell broke and the enchantment was gone.

Knowing the alphabet was half the battle won, for I was soon able to put letters together and to form little words. After a while I began to know how to put words together and form sentences. I was getting on. But it wasn't as easy or as simple as it sounds. Mother had by now seven other children to care for beside myself. Fortunately she had a real ally in my sister Lily, or "Titch," as we called her.

Lily was the eldest and the little mother of the circle, a small, wiry kid with flowing black curls and flashing eyes. She could be very sweet when she liked—quite a proper little angel. But she wasn't very angelic when she was roused. She realized my mother's tough situation quicker than any grown woman would, and responded. She busied herself looking after the others so that Mother could spend more time with me. She cooked, and washed and dressed the smaller ones and made sure the bigger ones washed behind their ears every morning before setting out for school. Perhaps she was just a shade too zealous, for often Jim or Tony would slink, shamefaced, into the kitchen, bearing testimony to little Lily's earnest housewifery in the form of swollen ears or black eyes.

### Hated To Wear Shoes

I could still not speak intelligibly, but by now I had a sort of grunting language which the family understood more or less. Whenever I got into difficulties and they couldn't make out what I was saying, I'd point to the floor and print the words out on it with my left foot. If I couldn't spell the words I wanted to write I flew into a rage, which only made me grunt still more incoherently.

Although I couldn't talk properly at seven years old, I was now able to sit up alone and crawl about from place to place on my bottom without breaking any bones or smashing any of Mother's china. I wore no shoes or any other kind of footwear. My mother had tried to make me used to having my feet covered from an early age, saying I looked very much neglected barefooted. But whenever she put anything on my feet I always kicked them off again quickly. I hated having my feet covered. When Mother put shoes or stockings on my feet I felt as any

*Continued on page 57*

# MAGNET IN THE SKY

*by* ***MARK DERBY***

ILLUSTRATED BY T. S. LA FONTAINE

Sooner or later he'd kill himself up there. There could be no future in marrying a man like that . . . and no happiness for her without him

IT LOOKED LIKE ROSE'S lucky day. For the first time in her year as hostess, her plane was grounded. And it had happened in Bangkok, the most likely place to meet Mack. She'd given no more than a single glance round, small hands clasped excitedly, long olive-grey eyes narrowed against the fierce sun blaze, when he was at her side. After he'd kissed her, she straightened her uniform cap and asked breathlessly: "Mack, can we go dancing tonight?"

But a frown darkened his sky-blue eyes. "We've got a ferry job, Rose. To Penang. Have to spend the night there."

Rose blinked and said: "We don't have much luck, do we?"

She was telling him about being grounded for twenty-four hours when his frown suddenly cleared.

"But of course we can dance tonight! In Penang. Come along with us."

"In *that*?" Her eye had caught the shabby outline of Mack's ten-year-old war transport parked in a corner of the airfield. "Mack, I could knit you a better kite than that."

He let it go. "Do come, Rose," he pleaded.

She said again: "We don't have much luck, do we, Mack?"

"Rose, this *is* luck. We can dance tonight, if you really want to."

She closed her eyes a second as the old, bitter-sweet pang shot through her. Sweet because she loved Mack as surely as he loved her. Bitter because the whole thing stopped there.

It was the magnet in the sky that kept them apart. She longed to marry him, she'd sworn she never would as long as he refused to give up his wild sky-life with his partner Davy Brooke in their crazy old wartime plane, freelancing along the perilous skyways between Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok and Saigon.

A MINUTE more and it had started up again. "Rose." He seized her hand and his eyes stared searchingly into her face. "Sooner or later you're going to marry me, you know you are. Why not now?"

She only said: "Not now, Mack, and not ever unless you come down out of the sky. Where's the sense in marrying a suicide?"

"I've been a pilot for ten years, Rose, ever since I was nineteen. I don't know any other life. What's wrong with it?"

"Nothing," she answered, "for a youngster with no responsibilities, or a man with a real plane. . . . Oh, Mack, don't you see? All that would happen would be a wedding and a honeymoon and then you'd take off in that suicide

**He seized her hand, his eyes searching her face. "I've been a pilot ten years, Rose, ever since I was nineteen. I don't know any other life"**

kite and I'd lose you." She put on her sunglasses to protect her from the heart-stealing pleading of his eyes. She was scared they were going to fight. They would, if Mack took the old argument any farther.

But he only kissed her suddenly and said again: "Come with us, Rose. It'll be the first time we've carried a hostess!"

Longing and impulse took charge of her. "Any passengers?" she asked, surrendering.

"Only one," he said. "Wait till you see him."

Rose was never really free of tension during take-off. This time she was scared to death. The vibration and uproar of the old engines were frightful. Sitting in the rattan chair Mack had somehow borrowed from the airport, she gripped the handle of the toilet door and closed her eyes as the veteran transport climbed like a tired bird off the end of the runway. When she opened them again, the treetops were below her and the passenger was staring at her with huge, yellow eyes.

He was a magnificent tiger, trapped ten days before in the Siamese jungle and on his way to join a ship carrying a collection of wild beasts to zoos and menageries in Europe. Rose was scared of him. When Mack had placed the rattan chair two yards away from the yellow eyes staring through the bars of a bamboo cage, she'd been terrified. But Mack had said easily: "Not an inch of room up front. Davy and I've modified everything to fit the two of us. But you won't be scared back here, will you? Tail's always the safest place in a crash, anyway!" And by that time her pride wouldn't let her back out.

After her jetliner's hushed, oily boring through the stratosphere, she found the deafening, laboured climb of Mack's old plane unnerving.

The tiger's stare was unnerving, too; the nearness of something so powerful and so full of hate horrified her. The glare of the big cat's eyes, even the smell of him, seemed charged with icy menace.

But later, perhaps an hour later, when the stifling heat in the plane had changed to winter cold and she glimpsed through a bleary window a strip of beach and beyond that a vast expanse of what looked like grey parsley, her feelings changed and she found herself talking to the great beast in a sighing voice that was inaudible in the din.

"That's your home down there, isn't it. The jungle. Where you were a king. And now you'll be a slave in a cage till you die, far away."

PITY lessened her fear. The tiger blinked, lowered his great gold, black and white head and licked a wound on his right forepaw. She felt his humiliation and sighed again. "But at least the future can't haunt you, the way mine haunts me." And she asked: "Shall I have to break my heart because Mack won't leave the sky and live with me on the ground? Is he that stubborn?"

The tiger raised his head and looked at her and she felt closer to him. There were cages without bars: was she trapped in one? In love with a man she was scared to marry. . . .

She fell into an unhappy doze, and when at last she came fully awake again Mack was climbing. There were big thunderheads to climb over and the engines were not responding willingly. They roared through another long, slow hour before they were enveloped suddenly in near darkness and the plane bucked and plunged, sending her chair forward against the tiger's cage. Mack hadn't managed to climb the highest monsoon thunderhead: they were in it.

The old plane seemed to lose its head, staggering, sideslipping, bouncing and plunging. In a brief interval of visibility, she saw limestone peaks fringed with jungle and a monstrous thunderhead sending out forks of lightning like a battleship firing broadsides through a smoke-screen. Then it was dark again and she could see no more of the tiger than the glitter of its great eyes. There was a sickening lurch and in the same moment the port engine coughed, recovered its breath, coughed again and suddenly cut out.

"We're going to crash," she said with slow, dazed lips.

At once the starboard engine cut out, and in place of its uproar there was only the muffled hiss of the raincloud. It seemed an eternity before the shock of violent scratches along the floor under her feet, like the clawing of a pack of wild beasts, and finally a skidding to a standstill on the plane's left side.

In that same instant, Rose saw the great cage tilt up and crash down, and the tiger's head and forelegs burst through the smashed bamboo bars. Then the toilet door crashed open into her face and heavy raindrops fell upon her hair through a large hole torn in the tail.

"Mack! Oh, Mack!"

SHE climbed through the toilet door, pulled it to after her and shot the bolt. Her uniform tore on the jagged edges of the hole as she scrambled through. They had pancaked on a grove of feathery shrub that covered a ledge overhung by a limestone cliff, the scrub pillowing the crash as it yielded to the plane's weight and momentum. Most of the tailplane was gone and the port wing and engine had apparently fallen over the cliff.

And Mack . . . Mack was slumped sideways in the smashed nose, his eyes closed and all one side of his face scarlet with blood.

The monsoon cloud had lifted and the setting sun was slanting a last greeny-yellow ray across jungle peaks and valleys by the time Rose had got Mack out of the plane and into the shelter of a shallow limestone cave.

The head wound, to her wild relief, was nothing, but his right leg and some ribs were obviously broken. The struggle to extricate him from the wreck and into shelter had been as much an ordeal for her as for him.

He hardly spoke a word after his first cry of relief at seeing her and his anxious inquiry for Davy. Poor Davy must have gone over the cliff with the port wing, but though there was another wooded ledge only twenty feet below she could get no reply to her repeated calls. Mack hardly spoke a word and Rose was too busy for talk.

She fixed his leg in a rough splint and then salvaged his bag from under the pilot's seat. It held almost everything Mack owned in the world, including a bottle of brandy and a phial of sleeping tablets. The last thing she did before lying down in the dark beside him was to give him a brandy-and-water with two sleeping pills in it.

Then he spoke.

"You were right," he said.

She kissed him and murmured: "Just rest, Mack. Just don't worry."

"You were right," he said again, bitterly. "Why didn't you stay clear of me? You saw I was no good."

She whispered: "If you talk like that you'll make me cry, Mack."

That silenced him for a minute or two. Then he said: "Listen, Rose. In the morning let's play it this way. You kiss me goodbye and then follow the stream from the little waterfall behind this cave. Water makes for the sea; besides, people have to live near water, so you'll stand a chance of coming to a village. We should be on the Malayan side of the frontier, and a couple of minutes before the crash I caught a glimpse of clearings in the jungle. Tin mine, perhaps. If you go off at sunrise you'll stand a chance of getting out alive."

She rested her cheek against his and stared up at the vivid stars. "I came today because I wanted to be with you," she said shortly. "I haven't changed my mind, Mack. I still want to be with you. As long as I can."

His voice was unsteady as he asked for another cigarette.

"Only ten left," she said. "Try to sleep, Mack."

The drug was quickly gaining control of his shocked, wounded body and exhausted mind. He spoke only once again, when he was no more than half conscious.

"The wife God sent me," he sighed. "The wife God sent me, and what have I done to her? . . ."

She did cry then, but he could not hear any more.

The moon rose in vivid splendour an hour later and the tiger roared. Rose started up in alarm. The deep roar, muffled in the wrecked plane's fuselage, sent a shock through the jungle night. The crickets still sawed out their deafening din, but all the other jungle sounds ceased abruptly. Mack slept on.

On a sudden impulse, she rose up and walked

**Rigid with fear, she wrenched open the door**

**and held it there. There was a terrible moment of uncertainty. Then, with a beautiful, graceful bound, the great beast swept past her towards the jungle**

along to the wreck. With her face pressed to one of the bleary windows, she detected movement inside. He was out of his cage.

Sudden pity shook her. The tiger had come home after all, but only to die a terrible death there. The one actual break in the tough alloy of the fuselage was a gash the size of a football in the uptilted floor and, just as Rose bent to examine it, a huge paw stole out through it into the moonlight. It came out slowly, stealthily, but suddenly it convulsed and the terrible claws shot out of their sheaths and tore in a frenzy at the unyielding metal.

With a little exclamation, Rose backed. In the same moment the roar, deafening and unspeakably savage, shattered the night for a second time. She stood on a torn and buckled fragment of the tailplane and wondered if it could be all a dream. The jungle hills and valleys in the moonlight were a dreamscape, the tiger's roar a nightmare terror, and she herself must have looked unreal there, in her torn B.O.A.C. uniform, between her injured lover and a frenzied wild beast, all three of them doomed. . . .

What followed a moment later was even more dreamlike. From a rock above the ledge something huge and infinitely graceful floated down in a liquid leap and froze into gold, white and black immobility by the wreck, while in Rose's ears sounded a low cry uncannily like the little cat's cry at home, if you took up one of her kittens.

It lasted a single moment. As the tigress turned and saw her, Rose blinked once. When here eyes flew open again, the lovely beast was gone.

Rose released her breath and went back to lie close to Mack again. Her heart was beating madly, but not from fear. From some other excitement.

And again it was like a dream. Because it was beauty, the beauty of the tigress and the jungle night, that had so shaken her. Her eyes had been opened to the magnetism of the wild and the untamed. She had reached a new stage in her understanding of Mack.

When the sun rose, Mack was still asleep. She said a prayer, with her eyes on his white face. Then she nerved herself to go into the jungle.

The wah-wahs, the gibbon apes, were filling the air with their dawn chorus and that, too, was inexpressibly wild. She turned from the cliff edge and pushed her way into the dense mass of creeper, thorns, ferns and towering perpendicular trunks that made up the jungle. She was hunting for dead wood to make a signal fire, but it was hard to find. At the end of fifteen minutes she had pushed her way through only two hundred yards of jungle and found no more than a handful. And she was lost.

Suddenly she remembered stories of people who'd lost themselves in tropical jungle. A dozen steps, and they could be hopelessly lost. She ought to have stayed by the little stream.

She turned back, but after a minute or two she

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# Skipper Wilson sails on a fishing gamble

*by KEITH ELLIS*

**His quarry is the elusive salmon. Off Canada's Pacific coast, he may catch nothing for days, or make a small fortune in an hour**

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

JUST OFF THE COAST of British Columbia, Captain Gordon Wilson, of Vancouver, was manoeuvring his fishing-boat, the purse-seiner Cape Dorset, alongside a school of salmon. His net had almost encircled them and, from the froth of bubbles, he guessed he had a "set" of around 1,500.

Suddenly a voice crackled over the radio: "Cape Dorset, you're over the line. You'll have to spill your fish." Resignedly, Wilson gave the order to haul in the seine. "It was the fisheries protection vessel," he explains. "The tide was at the flood and I hadn't noticed that we'd crossed the seining limit. If we hadn't spilled our fish, we'd have been run in."

The taking of salmon by purse-seine—a large encircling net—in shallow, inshore waters is forbidden by Canadian law. Like all responsible fishermen, Wilson accepts this as just one of the regulations necessary to ensure a thriving fish population. He knows that salmon were once common on both sides of the Atlantic and in the seas around Europe, but have been greatly reduced in number in these areas, mainly because of overfishing.

Today, salmon is found in large quantities only in the Northern Pacific—around the Pacific

Wilson (left) helps his crew with the seine which traps the fish. Once, more than ten thousand salmon escaped from the net at the last minute

coasts of Canada, the North-western United States, Alaska, Russia and Japan. Before conservation measures were taken, it was declining even in North American waters.

British Columbian salmon catches are higher now than they have been for many years, and fishermen are making more money than ever before. Tall and thickset, with spectacles and short, light-brown hair, fifty-four year old Wilson is one of 3,500 fishermen who man seven hundred purse-seiners. Between them, they accounted for almost half last year's catch of 190,800,000 pounds of salmon. In the five months' season, they earn between £2,500 and £3,500, an income which enables them to buy a home of their own, a full range of labour-saving household equipment and a large American car.

### Lucky "Set" Was Made At Dawn

In spite of the industry's prosperity, Wilson insists that salmon fishing is still a gamble. "Sometimes we don't catch a single fish for days together." With a few lucky sets, however, he may make hundreds of pounds in a few hours.

One day last August, soon after daybreak, Wilson was looking for salmon in the Strait of Georgia. Suddenly, through his binoculars, he saw fish leaping from the water about half a mile away. Changing course, he noticed that the fish were turning on their sides before falling back. "That told me they were sockeye—and there was a good showing."

Excited—for sockeye are the most valuable of all salmon—he manoeuvred his boat round the school and let out his net. An hour later, he had two thousand fish in his hold. "They weighed eight pounds each on average," he recalls, "and fetched one shilling and ninepence a pound." One hour's fishing had brought Wilson and his crew a catch worth more than £1,400.

Purse-seiners fish from the end of June to the beginning of November. Broad-beamed and about fifty feet long, they have powerful diesel engines which carry them along at speeds of ten miles an hour. Mostly, they stick to Canada's rugged west coast, from Vancouver to the Alaskan border. "Often there's no sun for weeks at a time up north," says Wilson. "We come back white as ghosts." He has a crew of six—his mate, Jock, an engineer, a cook and three deck-hands.

### Fishermen Eavesdrop On Radio

As captain, Wilson's first job is to find the fish. "Largely, it's a matter of experience," he says. "Fish follow regular patterns and my records of previous seasons are a good guide." Even better are the radio conferences which the larger canning companies hold three times a day —at 9 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.—with their packer boats.

These "packers" are deployed throughout the fishing-grounds to collect fish from the seiners to deliver to the canneries. They report how many fish have been caught in their various areas so that the company can plan its canning programme and divert the packers to the areas where the catches are heaviest. Fishermen eavesdrop on the conferences to find out where most fish are being caught.

"If the schools are increasing," says Wilson, "I wouldn't set unless I saw quite a few jumping. At the start of the season or when fish are scarce, I'd set after seeing one only—or perhaps none at all."

When Wilson gives the order, one of the crew climbs into a skiff at the stern of the boat. The purse-seine is coiled on a power-operated turntable on the stern. The skiffman takes one end of the net and rows away from the Dorset, which moves in the opposite direction.

As the net falls into the water, cork floats along one edge and lead weights along the other cause it to hang perpendicularly, like a curtain. Meanwhile, Wilson steers the Dorset in a circle round the school and back to the skiffman, so that the fish are completely surrounded by a curtain of net a quarter of a mile in circumference and about seventy feet deep.

To close the seine, a power-winch hauls in the purse-line, a chain which runs through a series of brass rings fitted between the lead weights along the lower edge of the net: the bottom of the net closes up like an old-fashioned purse. It is while the net is closing that the fish are most likely to get away.

One day, in the mouth of the River Fraser, Wilson had in his net one of the largest sets of sockeye he had ever seen. "There were ten to twelve thousand fish," he estimates. "Unfortunately, before the seine was fully pursed up, the salmon decided they were going out." In a solid mass, the fish plunged under the boat, causing it to roll slightly.

"We could see them coming up at the other side," Wilson sorrowfully recalls. "Altogether, we managed to hold six or seven hundred. The boat next to us got sixteen thousand, one of the biggest catches of sockeye in recent times."

### Sharks Get Caught In The Net

Besides salmon, Wilson has found in his seine cat-fish, dog-fish, rock-cod, ling, wolf-fish, tuna and mackerel. Several times, he has even caught sharks. "They may be twelve feet long and weigh two hundred and fifty pounds, but they don't cause much damage. Sometimes they roll themselves in the net and, by the time we haul them aboard, they're exhausted. They die easily."

A few deep-water seiners are sometimes troubled with hake, which get caught in the meshes of the net. Occasionally, there are so many that it takes a whole day to extract them.

Worst of all are the jelly-fish, anything from two inches to two feet in diameter. They sting fiercely. "We try to get them out of the net with a skimmer and, if the catch is small, we lift out the salmon individually with a peugh, a kind of gaff. But often you can't avoid the jelly-fish and they burn your arms—and, sometimes, your face."

The possibility of both very large and very small catches makes salmon-fishing a highly competitive profession. In a clash at sea, one fisherman shot at another with a rifle. Another rammed and sank his rival's boat. Wilson himself recently witnessed an incident which might have led to violence but happily ended only in vituperation. Judging that a school of fish was drifting towards the shore, a fisherman started to make his set well in front of them, so that he could complete the circle when they were closer in. A second fisherman cut in smartly and set his net between the fish and the net already laid. "That's known as corking," says Wilson.

### Part Of Seine Was Torn Away

Seeing that he was in a hopeless position, the first fisherman hauled in his net, sailed rapidly round and relaid it right inside his rival's set. The second man had to haul in quickly to save his net from being entangled. "They cursed each other roundly," says Wilson. "We just sat back and had a good laugh."

Because a close season is declared every week from 6 p.m. on Thursday to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Wilson regards the loss of a day's fishing as disastrous. Some time ago, his vessel set at 8 a.m. one Wednesday, and his crew were pursing up when the lead-line caught on a reef.

"We had a good set, around three thousand fish," recalls Wilson. But there was a strong tide running and by the time they had freed the net, it was 3 p.m. The fish had fled and a third of the seine was torn away. "To repair the net cost three hundred and fifty pounds and took us till Friday night."

The fishermen's day starts at dawn, which may be around 3 a.m. in the higher latitudes. Between then and late evening, they may make

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**It's a good life," says Skipper Wilson, who began salmon fishing when he was sixteen. The money is good, too. But there is one drawback— "You have to be away from home too much"**

**At the canneries, mechanical elevators transfer the salmon from the holds of the packer boats to huge bins. One catch, of two thousand fish, earned Wilson and his crew £1,400 from a cannery**

# DESTINATION UNKNOWN

## *by AGATHA CHRISTIE*

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

Her own journey had ended; to the world, she was dead. Now she had another woman's name, another past, and was travelling to meet an unknown husband

The two women were alone together. Hilary grasped the cold hand and spoke clearly and emphatically: "Yes," she said. "You are dying. Is there

SUICIDE. TO HILARY CRAVEN it was just another word for release. Release from the haunting memory of her daughter's grave. Release from the heartache that Nigel's faithlessness had caused her, from bitter thoughts of the divorce, and the awful emptiness of life since. . . .

Hilary had gone on holiday to Casablanca to escape those memories. But they were still as sharp as they had been in London. If only she had not been held up by fog! She should have been on the earlier plane to Casablanca, the plane which had crashed. Now she had to plan suicide.

It was hard to get enough sleeping pills for the job; she had to go from shop to shop. It amused her to see an owl-like young Englishman just as diligent in his search for a particular toothpaste. . . .

But that night, as she prepared her "overdose of sleeping pills," the young Englishman walked unceremoniously into her room. Her quest for drugs had not escaped him. If she wanted to

**any message you want me to give your husband?"**

die, he said, there was a way in which she could help England.

He was a British agent named Jessop. He was shadowing the wife of a missing atom scientist, Tom Betterton. It had seemed likely that Betterton's wife would lead him to his man —but she had been a passenger in the crashed plane. She was now in hospital—dying.

Then he made a staggering proposal.

Hilary and Mrs. Betterton were both redheads; their passport descriptions were almost identical. Would Hilary take her place—and risk getting through to Betterton?

It was a dangerous mission to an unknown destination. Hilary thought about it. Why not, she thought; I have nothing to lose.

"Yes," she said. "I'll do it."

## PART TWO

### *The Warning*

IT WAS NOT REALLY COLD in the hospital but it felt cold. There was a smell of antiseptics in the air. Occasionally in the corridor outside could be heard the rattle of glasses and instruments as a trolley was pushed by. Hilary Craven sat in a canvas chair by a bedside.

In the bed, lying flat under a shaded light with her head bandaged, Olive Betterton lay unconscious. There was a nurse standing on one side of the bed and the doctor on the other. Jessop sat in a chair in the far corner of the room. The doctor turned to him and spoke in French.

"It will not be very long now," he said. "The pulse is very much weaker."

"And you think she will never recover consciousness?"

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders. "That I cannot say. It may be, yes, at the very end."

"There is nothing you can do—no possible stimulant?"

The doctor shook his head. He went out. The nurse followed him. She was replaced by a nun who moved to the head of the bed, and stood there, fingering her rosary. Hilary looked at Jessop and in obedience to a glance from him came to join him.

"You heard what the doctor said?" he asked in a low voice.

"Yes. What is it you want to say to her?"

"If she regains consciousness, I want any information you can possibly get, any password, any sign, any message, *anything*. Do you understand? She is more likely to speak to you than to me."

Hilary said with sudden emotion: "You want me to betray someone who is dying?"

Jessop put his head on one side in the birdlike manner which he sometimes adopted.

"So it seems like that to you, does it?" he said, considering. "Very well then, you shall say and do what you please. For myself I can have no scruples! You understand that?"

"Of course. It's your duty. You'll do whatever questioning you please, but don't ask *me* to do it."

"You're a free agent."

"There is one question we shall have to decide," said Hilary. "Are we to tell her that she is dying?"

"I don't know. I shall have to think it out."

HILARY nodded and went back to her chair. She was filled now with a deep compassion for the woman who lay there dying. The woman who was on her way to join the man she loved. Or were they all wrong? Had she come to Morocco simply to seek solace, to pass the time until perhaps some definite news could come to her as to whether her husband were alive or dead? Hilary wondered.

Time went on. It was nearly two hours later when the click of the nun's beads stopped. She spoke in a soft, impersonal voice.

"There is a change," she said calmly. "I think, madame, it is the end that comes. I will fetch the doctor."

She left the room. Jessop moved to the opposite side of the bed, standing back against the wall so that he was out of the woman's range of vision. The eyelids flickered and opened. Pale, incurious blue eyes looked into Hilary's. They closed, then opened again. A faint stir of perplexity seemed to come into them.

"Where . . . ?"

The word fluttered between the almost breathless lips, just as the doctor entered the room. He took her hand in his, his finger on the pulse, standing by the bed looking down on her.

"You are in hospital, madame," he said. "There was an accident to the plane."

"To the plane?" The words were repeated dreamily in that faint, breathless voice.

"Is there anyone you want to see in Casablanca, madame? Any message we can take?"

Her eyes were raised painfully to the doctor's face. She said: "No," and looked again at Hilary. "Who—who——"

Hilary bent forward and spoke clearly and distinctly. "I came out from England on a plane, too—if there is anything I can do to help you, please tell me."

"No—nothing—nothing—unless——"

"Yes?"

"Nothing."

The eyes flickered again and half closed. Hilary raised her head and looked across to meet Jessop's imperious commanding glance. Firmly, she shook her head.

Jessop moved forward. He stood close beside the doctor. The dying woman's eyes opened again. Sudden recognition came into them. She said: "I know *you*."

"Yes, Mrs. Betterton, you know me. Will you tell me anything you can about your husband?"

"No."

OLIVE BETTERTON'S eyelids fell again. Jessop turned quietly and left the room. The doctor looked across at Hilary. He said, very softly, *"C'est la fin!"*

The dying woman's eyes opened again. They travelled painfully around the room, then they remained fixed on Hilary. Olive Betterton made a very faint motion with her hand, and Hilary instinctively took the white, cold hand between her own.

The doctor, with a shrug of his shoulders and a little bow, left the room. The two women were alone together. Olive Betterton was trying to speak:

"Tell me—tell me——"

Hilary knew what she was asking, and suddenly her own course of action opened clearly before her. She leaned forward over the recumbent form.

"Yes," she said, her words clear and emphatic. "You are dying. That's what you want to know, isn't it? Now listen to me. I am going to try to reach your husband. Is there any message you want me to give him if I succeed?"

"Tell him—tell him—to be careful. Boris—Boris—dangerous. . . ."

The breath fluttered off again with a sigh. Hilary bent closer.

"Is there anything you can tell me to help me—help me in my journey, I mean? Help me to get in contact with your husband?"

*"Snow."*

The word came so faintly that Hilary was puzzled. Snow? *Snow?* She repeated it uncomprehendingly. A faint, ghostlike little giggle came from Olive Betterton. Faint words came tumbling out.

*"Snow, snow, beautiful snow!*
*You slip on a lump, and over you go!"*

She repeated the last word. "Go . . . go and tell him about Boris. I didn't believe it. I wouldn't believe it. But perhaps it's true. . . . If so, if so . . ." a kind of agonized question

Yelling and pushing, the porters crowded round her. Hilary turned gratefully when she heard an urbane voice say: "Permit me to assist you, Madame"

came into her eyes which stared up into Hilary's. ". . . take care. . . ."

A queer rattle came into her throat. Her lips jerked.

Olive Betterton died.

* * *

The next five days were strenuous mentally, though inactive physically. Immured in a private room in the hospital, Hilary was set to work. Every evening she had to pass an examination on what she had studied during that day.

All the details of Olive Betterton's life, as far as they could be ascertained, were set down on paper and she had to memorize and learn them by heart. The house she had lived in, the daily women she had employed, her relatives, the names of her pet dog and her canary, every detail of the six months of her married life with Thomas Betterton. Her wedding, the names of her bridesmaids, their dresses, the patterns of curtains, carpets and chintzes. Olive Betterton's tastes, predilections, and day by day activities. Her preferences in food and drink.

Hilary was forced to marvel at the amount of seemingly meaningless information that had been massed together. Once she said to Jessop: "Can any of this possibly *matter*?"

And to that he had replied quietly: "Probably not. But you've got to make yourself into the authentic article. Think of it this way, Hilary. You're a writer. You're writing a book about a woman. The woman is Olive. You describe scenes of her childhood, her girlhood; you describe her marriage, the house she lived in. All the time that you do it she becomes more and more of a real person to you. Then you go over it a second time. You write it this time as an autobiography. You write it *in the first person*. Do you see what I mean?"

She nodded slowly, impressed in spite of herself.

"You can't think of yourself as Olive Betterton until you *are* Olive Betterton. It would be better if you had time to learn it up, but *we can't afford time*. So I've got to cram you. Cram you like a schoolboy—like a student who is going in for an important examination." He added, "You've got a quick brain and a good memory, thank the Lord."

He looked at her in cool appraisement.

The passport descriptions of Olive Betterton and Hilary Craven were almost identical, but actually the two faces were entirely different. Olive Betterton's had had a quality of rather commonplace and insignificant prettiness. She had looked obstinate but not intelligent. Hilary's face had power and an intriguing quality. The deep-set bluish-green eyes under dark, level brows had fire and intelligence in their depths. Her mouth curved upwards in a wide and generous line.

Jessop thought: There's passion there, and guts, and somewhere, damped but not quenched, there's a gay spirit that's tough—and that enjoys life and searches out for adventure. "You'll do," he said to her. "You're an apt pupil."

THIS challenge to her intellect and her memory had stimulated Hilary. She was becoming interested now, keen to achieve success. Once or twice objections occurred to her. She voiced them to Jessop.

"You say that I shan't be rejected as Olive Betterton. You say that they won't know what she looks like, except in general detail. But how can you be sure of that?"

Jessop shrugged his shoulders.

"One can't be sure—of anything. But we do know a certain amount about the set up of these shows, and it does seem that internationally there is very little communication from one country to another. They operate in cells. I dare swear that all that the cell operating here knows is that Olive Betterton will arrive on such and such a plane and is to be given such and such instructions. You see, it's not as though she were important in *herself*.

"If they're bringing her to her husband, it's because her husband wants her brought to him and because they think they'll get better work out of him if she joins him. She herself is a mere pawn in the game. You must remember, too, that the idea of substituting a false Olive Betterton is definitely a spur-of-the-moment improvisation—occasioned by the plane accident and the colour of your hair. Our plan of operation was to keep tabs on Olive Betterton and find out where she went, *how* she went, whom she met—and so on. That's what the other side will expect us to do."

Hilary asked: "So you'll be keeping tabs on me?"

"Of course."

"How?"

He shook his head. "I shan't tell you that. Much better for you not to know. What you don't know you can't give away."

"Do you think I would give it away?"

Jessop put on his owl-like expression again. "I don't know how good an actress you are—how good a liar. It's not easy, you know. It's not a question of *saying* anything indiscreet. It can be anything, a sudden intake of the breath, the momentary pause in some action—lighting a cigarette, for instance. Recognition of a name or a friend. You could cover it up quickly, but just a flash might be enough!"

"I see. It means—being on your guard for every single split second."

"Exactly. In the meantime, on with the lesson!"

Codes, responses, various properties. The lesson went on; the questioning, the repetition, the endeavour to confuse her, to trip her up; then hypothetical schemes and her own reactions to them. In the end, Jessop nodded his head and declared himself satisfied.

"You've done well," he said. He patted her on the shoulder in an avuncular manner. "You're a good worker. And remember this, however much you may feel at times that you're all alone in this, you're probably not. I say *probably*—I won't put it higher than that. These are clever devils."

"What happens," said Hilary, "if I reach journey's end? I mean when at last I come face to face with Tom Betterton."

JESSOP nodded grimly. "Yes," he said. "That's the danger moment. I can only say that at that moment, *if all has gone well*, you *should* have protection. If, that is to say, things have gone as we *hope*; but the very basis of this operation, as you may remember, was that there wasn't a very high chance of survival."

"Didn't you say one in a hundred?" said Hilary dryly.

"I think we can shorten the odds a little. I didn't know what you were like."

"No, I suppose not." She was thoughtful. "To you, I suppose, I was just. . . ."

He finished the sentence for her. "A woman with a noticeable head of red hair who hadn't the pluck to go on living."

She flushed. "That's a harsh judgment."

"It's a true one, isn't it? I don't go in for being sorry for people. For one thing it's insulting. One is only sorry for people when they're sorry for themselves. Self pity is one of the biggest stumbling blocks today."

Hilary said thoughtfully:

"I think perhaps you're right. Will you permit yourself to be sorry for me when I've been liquidated, or whatever the term is, in fulfilling this mission?"

"Sorry for you? No. I shall curse like hell because we've lost someone who's worth while taking a bit of trouble over."

"A compliment at last." In spite of herself

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**Hilary paused for a moment at the door. There were two women in the small salon, and she caught a thrilled whisper: "They say she's the only survivor of that terrible plane crash last week"**

It was a change for Benny Hill when a young fan gave him a tie. Usually, admirers clamour for *his* ties as souvenirs

In a recent television show, Hill played "Mr. Twirly Whirly"—a burlesque of Raymond, Weasy." The act won praise from both public and critics. "Hill can be funny simply by

# Benny Hill, star who is scared by success

*by JOHN ENNIS*

**Fame and £400 a week make him nervous. "I'd rather be the highest-paid flop," he says, "than reach the top too soon"**

SHORTLY after the end of the war, a morose young private soldier named Benny Hill was looking after the stage props of an army show on tour in Germany. Sergeant Harry Segal, the comedian in charge of the show, had "wangled" him the job of stage manager at a time when it seemed that Hill would be out of army entertainment altogether. At a rehearsal of another show, which Hill was to have compèred, an officer had told him that he was no good, and had taken over as compère himself.

When they were well away from base, Segal offered Hill a chance to do an act in the show, but Hill's confidence was shattered and he refused. Then two of the cast caught influenza and another had an accident. Segal, desperately short-handed, told Hill to do an act, made it an order, and pushed him on to the stage.

"After I heard the first laugh, my confidence came back," Hill recalls. "I might have been finished but for that push from Harry Segal."

Today, at twenty-nine, Hill is one of the most popular B.B.C. comedians. He has broadcast more than 350 times in such radio series as *Starlight Hour, Third Division, Listen My Children* and *Anything Goes*. Readers of a film magazine recently voted overwhelmingly for him when they were asked which television personality they would most like to see in films. From television, radio, music-hall and cabaret appearances he earns £400 a week.

The bulk of his success has come in the last twelve months. Unused to prosperity, he still lives in lodgings in North London, travels by bus and underground railway, and stays in theatrical boarding-houses when on tour.

"I usually pay three guineas a week," he told an acquaintance recently, "but the place I am staying at this week is costing me five. Still, the food's very good." Ignoring suggestions by his agent, Richard Stone, that he should buy a car, Hill says: "If I bought one, he would have me driving through the night to engagements. I value my sleep."

Though inexpensive, his way of life has its drawbacks. "Almost everybody has seen me on TV in his living-room," he says. "In public, I have to be acting all the time."

### Sang In A Fish And Chip Shop

Some time ago, Hill visited a man who had been in the same army unit as a fellow artist. The man kept a fish and chip shop, and he offered supper to Hill. While Hill was eating, the proprietor kept telling his customers the name of his guest, and soon there was an interested crowd watching every move of his knife and fork. "Sing them a song," the shop-owner suggested. "I will," said Hill, "on condition you give them all free fish and chips."

He sang the song, then saw that his condition was fulfilled. "You've put me in an awkward position," said the downcast fish-fryer. "That's exactly what you did to me," replied Hill.

Part of Hill's careful attitude to money springs from his schooldays. "I was business-like, even then," he says.

On one occasion he began a series of trading deals with a single cigarette card, and finished with £2. "Another boy needed the card to complete a set, so I sold it to him for a half-penny," says Hill. "With the halfpenny I bought a battered toy racing car that had cost sixpence when new. I swapped the car for an old model yacht, painted the yacht, and exchanged it for a cricket bat. I passed on the bat in return for a chemistry set, and traded this for a magic lantern with slides. I swapped the magic lantern for a model railway, which I sold to a second-hand shop for two pounds."

The struggle to succeed has taught Hill to

the ladies' hairdresser, who is known as "Mr. Teasy raising an eyebrow." says one of his TV producers

Dressed as "Herbert Fudge," another of his characters, Hill appeared with Mary Malcolm (left) and Shirley Eaton at the Nottingham Radio Show. A few years ago he had to be bullied on to a stage

conserve his resources. He is nervous about his present success, and confesses: "I would really like to be the highest paid flop in the business. It is better to be looked upon as up and coming all your life than to get to the top too soon."

For nearly two years after leaving the army almost his only work was done in working-men's clubs in the London district—at fees ranging from fifteen shillings to two guineas. He has played in the clubs since his television success. "Now they say they won't insult me by offering me money," he explains. "But I like to keep faith with the clubs. Another year and I may be back there, glad to pick up a quid."

At one time, even club dates became so few that he decided to return to his parents in Southampton and find an everyday job. On his way to Victoria Coach Station, London—"cheaper than trains"—he spent ninepence to see a Danny Kaye film. When he came out he had decided to struggle on.

Later, when he was earning £20 a week, he flopped at Hull and Sunderland—places where he has since played to packed audiences—and was asked to drop his own comic act and carry on as a straight "feed" to another comedian. "I wasn't going to be typed as a straight man, so I walked out," says Hill. He was out of work for eight weeks.

### Hurled Himself Into The Mud

He used the time to write a number of television scripts, read some of them to Ronald Waldman, head of television light entertainment, and on the strength of his readings was given a forty-five minute television show. Even so, it was not until he was given a chance to compère *The Centre Show* that his comic capabilities were noticed by Kenneth Carter, a television variety producer.

The son of a shopkeeper, Hill was born in Southampton, where he won a scholarship to Taunton School. "I was king show-off, even then," he says. "At football I played goalkeeper, and when the ball came slowly towards me I used to wait until the last minute and then hurl myself into the mud to make a dramatic save. Parents were watching, and I loved the cheers."

Before he was seventeen he went to London and trailed round the suburban variety theatres. He was hired at £3 10s. a week as assistant stage manager and given small parts in a revue.

His first week was at a theatre in East Ham. On the Wednesday night he was setting properties behind the backdrop when he heard the principal comedian, Hal Bryan, shouting on the stage: "All by myself and nobody about," and singing: "Oh, I wish I had a friend to talk to."

Hill realized that Bryan was in trouble. "I was wearing make-up for my one-line part as a policeman," he recalls. "I knew there should have been two men on the stage, and one must have missed his cue. My knees were knocking, but I walked on. Bryan sailed into the opening line of the sketch, and whispered the words I was to reply. We struggled through it all somehow."

Afterwards, Hill went on tour with another revue. It was wartime, he had no permanent address, and his call-up papers went astray. He first knew of this when he was arrested at a theatre in Cardiff. He spent four days in the cells of a Cardiff police station, and then was escorted to Lincoln, where he was put to scrubbing floors in the detention room until the commanding officer could deal with him. When he heard the circumstances, the C.O. dismissed the case, and Hill became a driver-mechanic in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Today, apart from occasional visits to the cinema or to a football match, Hill has no interests outside the theatre.

He writes all his own scripts. "In the middle of a gay conversation he suddenly goes into a trance," says Jeremy Hawk, who acts as his foil on television and in music-hall appearances. "I sometimes think I have offended him, but then I find he is thinking of material for a broadcast."

In a recent *Show Case* programme, Hill mimicked Philip Harben, the television chef. Newspaper critics fell heavily for this act. One wrote: "These imitations, much funnier than a complete impersonation, are ingenious visual comedy."

At least part of the Philip Harben impersonation was inexact by accident. After he had arranged to do the imitations, Hill discovered that Harben was not due to appear on television again until after the *Show Case* programme. He had to remember as much as he could from the last time he had seen Harben, a year before.

Listener reaction figures have shown that Hill's popularity is spread evenly over the whole country. Both men and women appear to like him equally well. "He has the gift of being able to underplay, so important in television," says Kenneth Carter. "He can be funny with a glance or the raising of an eyebrow."

### Thirty Guineas For Nothing

Some time ago, when Hill was just becoming established, his agent booked him for a cabaret at a hotel. The fee was thirty guineas, and the manager of the hotel was the officer who, years before, had decided in Germany that Hill was no good as a compère-comedian. Hill went to the hotel, but so few people turned up for the show that it was called off. "I had already been paid, so I had thirty guineas for nothing."

A few days later, in the West End of London, Hill met Harry Segal, the one-time sergeant who had forced him on to the stage when his nerve had gone. Segal, then working as a comedian, looked downcast. "What's wrong?" asked Hill.

Segal at first refused to say, but eventually Hill drew from him the fact that he had been offered a pantomime engagement, but had not enough money to buy all the necessary costumes. "About thirty quid would put me right," said Segal.

"It will be paid into your bank tomorrow," said Hill.

"Somehow I knew in advance that he was going to say he needed thirty pounds," Hill says today. "I think it squared everything beautifully."

THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

# The schoolmaster referee gives lessons in fair play

*by DON EVERITT*

**With the discipline that keeps his class in order, Mervyn Griffiths controls the keyed-up stars of soccer. His secret? A little dictatorship—and a sense of humour**

AMID MOUNTING CHEERS, a Torquay United soccer player dribbled alone through the Crystal Palace defenders and scored. But the referee disallowed the goal. To the protesting Torquay team and the booing spectators, the businesslike man with thinning sandy hair indicated with his hands that the player had handled the ball.

He pointed firmly to a spot from which a free-kick was to be taken. But no one accepted the decision. The uproar continued.

Mervyn Griffiths—the referee—smiled broadly. He walked briskly to the offending player and lifted his arm for all to see. The Torquay team was wearing white jerseys, and on the inside of the man's sleeve a dirty brown mark showed where he had deflected the muddy ball on to the ground. Everyone watching the game roared with laughter.

Benjamin Mervyn Griffiths, considered by some authorities to be the finest soccer referee in the world, disciplines players—and, indirectly, crowds—with the same studied techniques that he uses in the school where he teaches in Newport, Monmouthshire.

"In class I have thirty or so children with differing temperaments," he says. "On the football field, I have twenty-two players, also with differing temperaments. The situations are much the same. Both call for a considerable sense of humour."

A fellow referee says: "Merv is a master of the soccer field." His wife, Violet, says: "There is a little bit of the dictator in him really, you know."

As with his pupils at school, Griffiths never makes a habit of showing up players. "I prefer to treat people with respect, to have a quiet word with a man as I'm passing him. Though a crowd may often think I've done nothing about an infringement, the players appreciate and respond to my method."

Once, Griffiths heard a player swear harshly at himself for making a bad pass. As they ran up the field together a moment later, Griffiths said: "I don't think that language is becoming to an English international." After the game, the player told him: "Thank you for the quietest but biggest telling off I've ever had on a football field."

Seven seasons of refereeing first-class football have brought forty-five year old Griffiths nearly all the major assignments of the game. He has officiated at two World Cup series, at an English Football Association Cup Final, and at numerous international matches. Though a Monmouthshire man, he claims with pride to be the first Welshman to referee the Cup Final and an international at Wembley. He justifies the claim by the fact that the Welsh F.A. controls Monmouthshire soccer.

## Secret Reports Made To F.A.

His rise as a referee has been most rapid, which indicates that the marks awarded him by the team managers at the end of every game must have been consistently high. "As a referee," a Football League official explains, "Mervyn is constantly taking an examination. Managers award from nought to four marks according to their judgment of a referee's performance, and submit them in confidence to the Football Association. If the aggregate at the end of a season doesn't reach a certain figure, a referee can be demoted."

Griffiths says that the ball has always run kindly for him. He has never had to send a player off the field; he has only once given an official caution; and his games have been markedly free from controversy. But all this has more to do with his manner and ability than with good fortune.

From the start of a game, Griffiths creates an air of good feeling by running on to the field with a broad smile. Unlike many referees who make their presence felt in every match, he feels that he should hardly be noticed. He uses his whistle as little as possible; he makes fast decisions, and illustrates them briefly with his hands for the benefit of players and spectators. "A referee's speed," he says, "can make or mar a game."

Teams rarely play rough or argue when Griffiths controls a game because they soon learn that, with his loping stride, he chases the ball more assiduously than anyone else on the field. He has been called the Zatopek of referees. Countless times, players have turned to protest at his whistle, only to find the man himself standing immediately behind, smilingly indicating the offence.

In 1950, a British referee with experience of South American soccer warned Griffiths not to accept an invitation to the World Cup series in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, because the Brazilians might well attack a referee if their side lost.

## Impassioned Appeal To Team

Ignoring the advice, Griffiths went to Rio, and learned that the first match he had to referee was between Yugoslavia and Brazil. Before the kick-off, the Mayor of Rio worked the crowd of 149,000 into a fever with an impassioned appeal to the Brazilian team for victory.

Minutes later, Griffiths disallowed a Brazilian goal. Players and spectators had no time to object to the narrow off-side decision. Their words and gestures froze as Griffiths, right up with the play, instantly beckoned the Yugoslavs to take the free kick, and then followed the ball up to the other end of the field.

Later, with equal brevity, Griffiths disallowed a Brazilian plea for a penalty. One of their players, tripped about twelve inches outside the penalty area, dived neatly inside the white line; but Griffiths stood watching him from less than five yards away. After the game, even the Brazilians acclaimed Griffiths as a hero. At the end of the series, he turned down an offer to stay refereeing in the country.

In supervising players of different countries, Griffiths has never found it difficult to make himself understood. He does not use his earnest Monmouthshire brogue. "There's language in a look," he says. His jutting chin, deep-set green eyes and pugnaciously turned up nose can convey a wealth of expression.

In the first half of a game between England and the Rest of the World, Zeman, an Austrian goalkeeper, made a bad error in trying to fly-kick a ball away from an England forward. The Englishman scored. A few minutes later

**Smiling, Mervyn Griffiths battles his way through a crowd of autograph hunters after a League Division One match a few weeks ago**

A schoolmaster at Newport, Monmouthshire, Griffiths has rejected many invitations to referee overseas. "Teaching is my life," he says

Griffiths checks his watch as Billy Wright, captain of Wolverhampton Wanderers, leads his team out for the second half of a recent match

Griffiths saw the Rest of the World team manager and his reserve goalkeeper walking round to their goal. When play went to the other end of the field, the goalkeepers changed over. Griffiths immediately stopped the game.

When he made signs to Zeman to return to the goal, the Austrian pulled a face and pointed to his foot to indicate he had been hurt. Not satisfied that the injury warranted a substitute, Griffiths frowned heavily, stuck out his chin, tightened his lips and pointed at the goal once more. Zeman went back meekly.

At half-time, however, the doctor to the Rest of the World team had the last word, and the reserve goalkeeper took over. "If one of my boys at school had such a small swelling," said Griffiths, "I'd tell him to get on with the game."

In the last minute of this same match, Griffiths gave a decision which brought him a volley of criticism for the first time in his career. He penalized one of the Rest of the World players for tripping Mortensen, the England forward. The resulting goal saved England's then unbeaten home record.

Sports reporters and the majority of the spectators felt that the player had tackled Mortensen fairly, but Griffiths had "not the slightest doubt it was a penalty." Two days later, a newsreel film of the match shot from the side of the field opposite to the press box proved him correct.

## Warned Not To Play Rugger

Born on January 17, 1909, at Blaina, Monmouthshire, Griffiths played soccer and rugby at school until a broken nose brought him a medical warning to play rugby no more. At Caerleon Training College for teachers, he won cricket and soccer colours.

In 1929 he applied for his first job, at a school in Ivybridge, Devon. His good humour served him well. At an interview a school governor asked him what he would do if a class suddenly burst into laughter. Griffiths said he hoped that if something amused the children he would find it humorous, too.

Later, the governor told Griffiths that his answer had won him the job. All the other applicants had said they would promptly suppress laughter in class.

At Ivybridge, Griffiths played with the local soccer team, rejected an offer of a trial from Plymouth Argyle and, in 1931, married a childhood sweetheart, Violet Green.

"After the wedding, I gave up soccer. I won't say my wife was afraid I'd be knocked about, because that's not quite right. It would be more true to say she encouraged my refereeing."

Griffiths did not, however, referee any games other than at school until 1934. Then, controlling his first junior league game, he was knocked out and taken by ambulance to hospital.

Between that incident and September, 1939, Griffiths graduated from Newport and District League referee to Football League linesman. After war service as an R.A.F. physical training instructor, he rose within three seasons to the Football League's select list of forty referees. In 1950, the International Federation of Football Associations appointed him to its international panel.

Now his sole remaining ambition is to referee in Ireland before he retires compulsorily in 1956, at the age of forty-seven.

Griffiths's training for his strenuous Saturday afternoons consists of no more than cycling to and from school and of joining in the physical training and games there. He neither drinks alcohol nor smokes. After a game he enjoys a fizzy drink—sometimes, he mixes lemonade and fruit salts.

Though English referees receive only £5 for a league match and souvenirs for internationals, Griffiths's success has given him no inclination to leave Newport and profit more handsomely. During the World Cup series in Berne, Switzerland, this year, he rejected a world record contract to referee in Brazil for six months. The salary and expenses would have totalled £4,750.

Griffiths is closely bound to Newport and to his home. "My life is teaching," he says. "My schoolboys give me something in life I'd miss in Brazil."

Griffiths believes that he will have a good match if the players wear red and blue, his favourite colours, or if he sees wedding parties on his way to the football ground. Going to referee the Newcastle and Portsmouth cup-tie in 1952, a game regarded as the finest cup-tie of the century, he passed seven weddings. "I *knew* it would be a wonderful game."

Once, Griffiths controlled the first half of a Football League game with his shorts on inside out, and his pockets flapping at his sides like little wings. When he discovered the mistake at half-time he decided to do nothing about it. So far, the match had gone well. He did not want to change his luck.

## He Changed Clothes In Taxi

Griffiths has learned to allow himself plenty of time to get to matches. To grounds in London and greater distances from Newport he now travels on the evening before the match. He used to go to London on a train leaving Newport at 8.20 on a Saturday morning and arriving at Paddington at 11.0. But one day fog delayed the train nearly three hours. Griffiths's match, at West Ham, was to begin at 2.30 p.m. At 1.55 Griffiths leaped across a Paddington platform into a taxi, having asked a fellow passenger to telephone West Ham and tell the officials he was on his way. Griffiths changed in the taxi, and arrived at the ground at 2.29.

He went first into the dressing-room to comb his hair. When he trotted on to the field, a linesman, deputizing as referee, was about to blow his whistle for the kick-off.

After the game, the West Ham manager said to Griffiths: "You're a cool customer, Merv, going to part your hair at the last second."

Griffiths replied: "I wanted to be quite composed. If I'd rushed straight on to the field, it would have taken me a little time to settle down. To referee properly, you must be mentally fit and alert from the time you blow the whistle."

THE END

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Giovanni Guareschi

DON CAMILLO is the priest of a village in the valley of the River Po, in Italy. His greatest adversary—and his greatest friend—is Peppone, the mayor of the village, and a Communist. The story of their rivalry has shaken the village—and the world—with laughter, and sometimes with tears.

Don Camillo is a postwar phenomenon, one of the greatest characters in modern fiction. And the story of his arrival in print reads almost like one of his own adventures.

It happened in 1946. Giovanni Guareschi, a volcanic Italian journalist, edited a humorous weekly called *Candido* and also wrote stories for *Oggi*. One day, working against the clock to get an edition to press, he found he still had space to fill. . . .

There was one quick way out. He had a story ready for *Oggi*. If he had it set in larger type, it would just fill the space in *Candido*. He did so.

"God's will be done!" he exclaimed.

"And God must have willed exactly what proceeded to happen," says Guareschi. "For if the first Don Camillo story had appeared in *Oggi*, it would have gone the way of its predecessors, and no one would have heard of it again."

But it came out in *Candido*, and the readers demanded more. Don Camillo had started on his fantastically successful career. Today, the world sales of the Don Camillo books run to several million. Two films have been made, and they, too, have had an astounding reception.

Meanwhile, Guareschi has been living as combative a life as that of his own pugnacious priest. His paper *Candido* is highly political and outspoken. So outspoken that Guareschi himself is now in prison, serving a year's sentence for libel.

**The stories in this supplement are taken from "Don Camillo's Dilemma," which has just been published by Victor Gollancz, price 10s. 6d.**

# DON CAMILLO'S DILEMMA

## *by Giovanni Guareschi*

"What the devil?" shouted Don Camillo. "You've got to let me in," panted Peppone

THE PRE-LENTEN CARNIVAL was a serious affair, not only because it drew so many people in a spending mood to the village, but also because it brought with it a complete truce to all political activities. For this reason Don Camillo never made it the butt of any of his sermons.

"Lord," he explained to the Christ over the main altar, "we've come to a point where men behave themselves only when they're silly. Let's allow them their fun. *Semel in anno licet insanire.*"

As for Mayor Peppone, he frowned upon the carnival because it irritated him to see that men couldn't pull together for any cause other than a frivolous one.

"They'll all come across with the money to decorate one of those stupid floats," he protested. "But just try to put over something worth while, such as the People's Revolution, and every last one of them is a skinflint."

Peppone spoke against the carnival for six months of the year. For the other six months he worked overtime organizing the parade.

That year everything smiled upon the carnival, because it came in a period of exceptionally fine weather and people came from far and wide to see it. From his post in the grandstand, Peppone looked down on the parade with satisfaction, finding it worthy of the population gathered in such large numbers to acclaim it.

Among the single competitors for a fancy-dress prize, his eyes fell upon a Red Indian riding a motor-cycle. After the fellow had gone

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

by, he wondered exactly what had drawn his attention, for the costume had nothing extraordinary about it, being composed chiefly of a big cardboard nose and a band of chicken feathers around the head. Then, in a flash, it came to him: it was the poster figure that used to advertise Indian motor-cycles.

When the parade came round again —it invariably made three circuits of the village—he ascertained that there was indeed a basis for his conclusion. This was the "Indian Motor-cycle" figure, and no mistake about it. Only the figure wasn't riding an Indian at all; he was astride an old B.S.A. model which Peppone recognized. It had been in his hands for repairs at least a hundred times. Only one question remained in Peppone's mind: Who was riding in Indian costume on Dario Camoni's old B.S.A.?

He left the grandstand and made his way with difficulty through the crowd, trying to keep up with the Indian. During a brief pause, the latter turned his head and looked at him. Peppone's doubts vanished. The rider of Dario Camoni's B.S.A. was Dario Camoni. Even behind a cardboard mask, those were unmistakably his eyes.

Peppone continued to follow the parade. When it had gone around for the third time, it drew up in the open space between the village and the river and disbanded.

THERE was such an array of floats, lorries and farm wagons that the Indian could not possibly escape. The only opening in the crowd was on to the street that had led them away from the central square, into the smaller square in front of the church. He was aware that Peppone had been following him and did not hesitate to turn around in this direction.

Don Camillo, who was smoking a cigar butt in front of the rectory, was stunned by the abruptness of the motor-cycle's arrival. Before he could recover from the shock, the motor-cyclist had dropped his machine and dashed through the rectory's open door. A second later Peppone rushed upon the scene, and, without so much as a glance at the priest, followed the fugitive's example. But Don Camillo's powerful body stood in the way.

"What the devil!" Don Camillo shouted. "What in the world are you doing? First an Indian nearly runs me down with a motor-cycle and then a mayor bumps into me on foot. Is it all part of some symbolical charade?"

"Look, you've got to let me in," panted Peppone. "I have a score to settle with Dario Camoni."

"Camoni? How does he come into the picture?"

"That Indian is Camoni!" said Peppone between clenched teeth.

Don Camillo pushed Peppone back, went into the rectory and locked the door. The Indian was sitting in the study, and the first thing Don Camillo did was to pull off his cardboard nose. It was Camoni, all right.

"You'd be better off if you really were an Indian," the priest told him.

Back in 1922, the river country of the little world was still in a state of political ferment, even though elsewhere the Fascists had consolidated their governmental position.

Dario Camoni was seventeen years old, and he wanted to make up for the time when he was too young to take part in the Black-versus-Red battle. He was a husky boy, and a hot-headed one. When he went into action his eyes blazed in a way that was more convincing than any amount of words.

Peppone was several years older and stood head and shoulders above him, but those cursed eyes caused him to steer clear. One evening when Peppone was talking to his girl on the bridge in front of her house, Dario Camoni rode up on a motor-cycle.

"Sorry to intrude," he said, "but I've been given a job to do."

He took a glass and a bottle out of his pocket and proceeded to empty the contents of the bottle into the glass.

"The doctor says you have indigestion and a little laxative will do you good," he continued, advancing with the full glass in one hand and his other hand grasping a hard object in his pocket. "My advice to you is to take your medicine, because some of this castor oil dripped on to my revolver and I don't want the trigger to slip in my fingers. If the dose is too strong for you, you can share it with your girl. I'm going to count to three. One . . . two. . . ."

Peppone took the glass and drained it to the last drop.

"Good for you!" said Dario Camoni, mounting his motor-cycle. "Be careful not to step on certain people's toes, or you may get something worse."

Although Peppone had managed to drink the castor oil, a form of punishment which the Fascists had brought into style, he could not swallow the insult. He had never forgotten it, and neither, for that matter, had Don Camillo.

**Peppone rushed forward and grabbed the Indian by the neck. "I'll make you drink!" he shouted, waving the bar**

IN that far-away 1922, Don Camillo was an untried priest, just out of the seminary, but he was no fool. He had preached a sermon against violence in general, and in particular against the bullies who were going around forcing unsavoury drinks upon other people. For this reason, one night he was called downstairs because someone was fatally ill and needed Extreme Unction. When he came down, there was Dario Camoni, with a Mauser in one hand and a glass of castor oil in the other.

"You're the one that needs the oil, Father, even if it's unholy. This will make your motor hum. And because I owe you particular respect as a member of the clergy, I'll count to four instead of to three."

And Don Camillo drank his ration down.

"There, Father," said Dario Camoni, "you'll see how much more clearly your brain will function tomorrow. And if you really want to be reduced to a condition where you'll need holy oil rather than unholy, just go on sticking your nose into our business."

Like Peppone, Don Camillo had found it easier to swallow the oil than the insult.

Years went by, and Dario Camoni remained an active Fascist as long as there was strong-arm work to be done. Then he retired from politics altogether. But he had oiled and beaten up too many people in his time to be forgotten. When the régime was overturned, in 1945, he found things too hot for him and went away.

More years passed, without news of Dario Camoni. Now he had returned in the disguise of a Red Indian. . . .

"I'd like to know what got into your head to think up something like this," Don Camillo said to him.

"I've been away from home for six years," murmured the Indian, "and I wanted like anything to come back. The only way I could do it was in disguise."

"Poor Camoni! You're so comical in your Indian dress that I'm inclined to be sorry for you." Don Camillo sighed. "Well, you may as well take it easy. You're almost a hundred per cent safe. If there weren't that glass of castor oil between us, I'd say a hundred per cent with no reservations."

"Is that silly business still on your mind?" asked the Indian, who was still panting from the chase. "That was thirty years ago and childish."

Don Camillo was about to embark upon a long harangue when the study door opened and Peppone appeared.

"Excuse me, Father, for coming through the window," he said, "but I had no other choice, since I couldn't come through the door."

The Indian had leaped to his feet, for the expression on Peppone's face wasn't exactly pretty. Moreover, Peppone had an iron bar in his hand and looked as if he intended using it.

Don Camillo stepped between them. "Don't let's have a tragedy in the middle of the carnival," he interposed. "We must all be calm."

"I'm perfectly calm," said Peppone, "and I have no intention of causing a tragedy. I have a job to do, that's all." He took two glasses out of one pocket, then, without taking his eyes off the Indian, a bottle out of the other and divided its contents between them.

"There," he said, standing back against the door. "The doctor says you have indigestion and a little laxative will do you good. Hurry up, because the oil has greased my iron bar and I'm afraid it may slip and fall on to your head. Drink down both glassfuls, one to my health and the other to the health of Don Camillo. I'm happy to pay my respects to him in this way."

The Indian turned pale as he backed up against the wall, and Peppone was truly fear-inspiring.

"Drink them down, I tell you!" he shouted, raising the iron bar.

"No, I won't," answered the Indian.

Peppone rushed forward and grabbed him by the neck. "I'll make you drink!" he shouted.

But the Indian's neck and face were covered with greasepaint and he managed to free himself. He leaped behind the table, grabbed the shotgun hanging on the wall and pointed it straight at Peppone.

"Don't do anything crazy," shouted Don Camillo, drawing over to one side, "that thing is loaded."

The Indian advanced on his enemy. "Throw down that bar," he said sharply, and his eyes were as blazing as they had been thirty years before.

Peppone let the bar fall to the floor.

"Now *you* drink," the Indian said between clenched teeth to Peppone. "I'll count to three. One . . . two. . . ."

Peppone gulped down the contents of one of the glasses.

"And now go back where you came from," the Indian commanded.

Peppone went away, and the Indian barred the study door. "He can send his police if he wants to," he said, "but if I'm killed, I won't go to Hell alone."

Don Camillo relit his cigar. "That's enough of your horseplay. Put down that gun and go away."

"Go away yourself," said the Indian coldly. "I'm waiting for them here."

"Very unwise, Redskin," said the priest. "I don't believe the palefaces will come, but if they do, how can you defend yourself with an empty gun?"

"That's an old joke and a poor one," laughed the Indian. "I wasn't born yesterday, for your information!"

Don Camillo went to sit down on the other side of the room. "Just look and see."

CAMONI peered suspiciously into the gun and his face whitened. The gun was not loaded.

"Put it down," said Don Camillo quietly, "take off your costume, leave the rectory on the garden side and cut through the fields. If you hurry, you'll catch the bus at Fontanile."

The Indian laid the gun on the desk.

"No use looking for the cartridges," Don Camillo told him. He had put on his glasses and was reading the paper. "The cartridges are in the cupboard and the key to the cupboard is in my pocket. I warn you that unless you get out of here in double-quick time, I'll be reminded of that drink you pressed upon me long ago."

The Indian tore off the remains of his costume and wiped the greasepaint off his face. He started to leave the room, but he lingered at the door and turned hesitantly around.

"Let's even the score," he said, and picking up the second glass of castor oil, he drained it.

"Quits?" he said interrogatively.

"Quits," answered Don Camillo, without even raising his head.

And the Indian disappeared.

Peppone came back later, looking green around the gills. "I hope you won't sink so low as to go around telling what happened to me," he said.

"I should say not," Don Camillo answered with a sigh. "You had one glass, but that wretch made me drink the other."

"Has he gone away?"

"Gone with the wind."

Peppone went home, and Don Camillo made a report to the crucified Christ over the altar.

"Lord," he explained, "what else could I do? If I'd told Peppone the gun wasn't loaded he'd have killed the other fellow for sure. Those Camonis are too pig-headed ever to

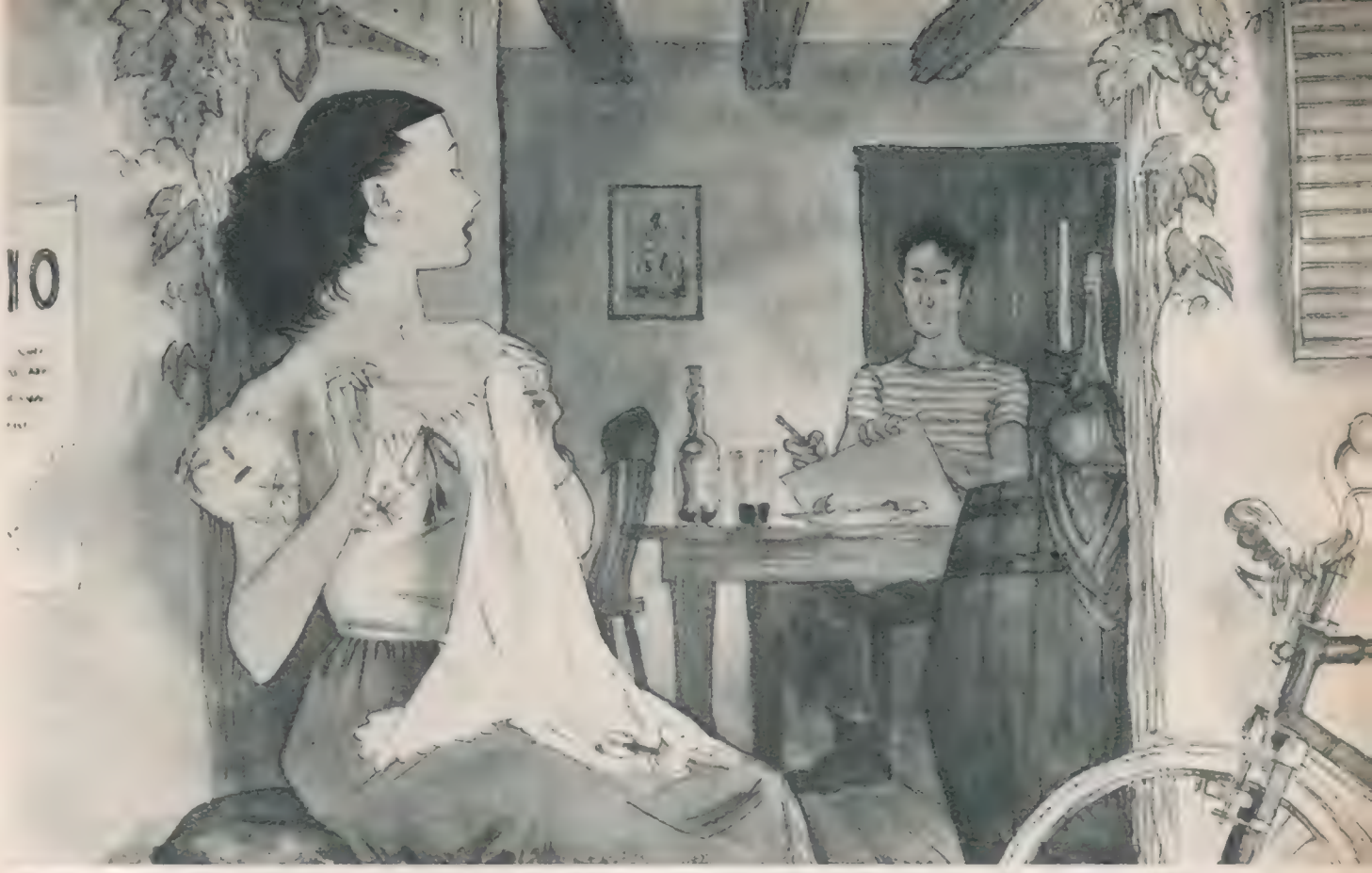
give in. As things are, there was no violence, and the Indian had a dose of oil, which You must chalk up to his credit. And by sacrificing my personal pride, I managed not to humiliate Peppone."

"Don Camillo," Christ answered, "when the Indian told Peppone to drink the oil, you knew the gun wasn't loaded and you could perfectly well have stepped in."

"Lord," said Don Camillo, throwing out his arms in resignation, "what if Peppone had found out that the gun wasn't loaded and failed to get that healthy drink?"

"Don Camillo," Christ said severely, "I ought to prescribe a drink of the same kind for you!"

It seems that as Don Camillo left the church he was muttering something to the effect that only Fascists could order any such prescription. But this is not altogether certain. In any case, when he hung the shotgun up on the wall, he placed the Indian bonnet as a trophy beside it, and every time he looked at it he reflected that there is perfectly good hunting to be found without benefit of a gun.



"I'm drawing you," he said, "because I take an interest in everything beautiful." The girl gave him a pitying smile

# THE EXCOMMUNICATED MADONNA

ONE morning, a young man rode up on a bicycle to the square in front of the church and began to look inquiringly around him. Having apparently found what he wanted, he leaned his bicycle up against a pillar of the arcade and unpacked the bundle on the carrier behind the saddle. He took out a folding stool, an easel, a paint box and a palette, and a few minutes later he was hard at work. Gradually, people crowded around and a hundred pairs of curious eyes followed his every brush-stroke.

Just then Don Camillo came along, walking as casually as if he just happened to be passing that way. Someone asked him what he thought of the painting.

"It's too early to say," the priest answered.

"I don't see why he chose the arcade," said a member of the would-be intelligentsia. "There are far more picturesque scenes along the river."

At noon, the villagers went away and the painter was able to put in two solid hours without interruption. When they returned, they were so agreeably surprised that they ran to the rectory.

"Father, you must come and see. His picture's a beauty."

The painter was, indeed, a talented fellow, and Peppone, who happened to be among the onlookers, summed it up aptly by saying: "There's art for you. I've been looking at that arcade for almost fifty years and I never realized that it was so beautiful!"

The painter was tired and packed his painting things away.

"Have you finished?" someone asked.

"No, I'll finish tomorrow. The light's changed and I can't get the same effects at this hour."

"If you'd like to leave your things at the rectory, there's plenty of room," said Don Camillo, who saw that the young man didn't know what to do with his wet canvas.

"I knew the clergy would try to take him over," said Peppone disgustlly, as the artist gratefullv accepted Don Camillo's offer.

After the young man had put his things in the hall closet, he asked Don Camillo to recommend some simple lodgings.

"You can stay here," said Don Camillo. "I'm happy to have an artist under my roof."

A fire was lit in the rectory and supper was on the table. The young man was cold and hungry, but after he had eaten the colour came back into his cheeks.

"I don't know how to thank you," he said.

"You mustn't even try," said Don Camillo. "Will you be staying in these parts for long?"

"I am afraid not. Tomorrow I must go back to the city. I have no more money, and a man has to eat."

"I have no money either," said Don Camillo, "but I can give you board and lodging for a month if you do some work in the church for me. Come and see."

The church had undergone some repairs a month before and where the workmen had replaced some fallen plaster there was a gap in the decoration.

"Is that all?" asked the painter. "I can do that in a single day."

"There is something more," said Don Camillo, "but it's such a big job, I haven't the courage to mention it."

"Let's hear about it."

Don Camillo went over to the rail of a side-chapel and threw on the light. A great scar filled the space above the altar.

"There was a leak," Don Camillo explained. "We found out about it too late: even though we mended the roof, the seepage had loosened the plaster. And so the painting of the Madonna was completely destroyed. The first thing to do, of course, is to replace the plaster. But I'm much more concerned over the repainting of the Madonna."

"You can leave that to me," said the artist. "Go ahead and get the plaster put in order, and meanwhile I'll make a sketch and have it ready to transfer to the wall when the mason gives me the word."

Don Camillo was so pleased that he didn't have breath enough even to answer: "Yes, sir!"

The young man had a genuine passion for painting, and the agreeable surroundings plus three square meals a day fired him to tremendous enthusiasm. He set off to explore the surrounding country to find a model for the Madonna. He didn't want to paint a conventional figure, but to spiritualize a genuine face, which he hoped to discover in the village.

BUT, after two weeks of searching, he was still no nearer finding his model. He had looked at hundreds of women in and around the village without finding a single face that interested him. Don Camillo told him not to give up hope; sooner or later he was bound to find the woman he sought.

But the young man was getting desperate. Next day, as he mounted his bicycle, he made this resolution: "If I don't find what I'm after today, then I'm going home."

He rode at random, stopping in at farmyards to ask for a glass of water or some other trifle and looking into the face of every woman he saw along the way. But he was only confirmed in his disappointment.

At noon he found himself in the settlement of La Rocca, a small place not far from the village, and stopped for a bite at the Pheasant Tavern. The big, low-ceilinged room with prints of characters from Verdi's *Otello* on the walls was completely deserted. An old woman appeared and he asked her for bread, sausage and a bottle of wine.

A FEW minutes later, when a hand deposited this simple fare on the dark table before him, he raised his eyes and was startled almost out of his skin. Here was the inspiration for which he had been searching.

The inspiration was about twenty-five years old and carried herself with the nonchalance of eighteen. But what captured the artist's fancy was the girl's face, and he stared at it, hardly daring to believe it was true.

"What's the matter?" the girl asked. "Have I done something to annoy you?"

"Please forgive me . . ." he stammered.

She went away, but returned a little later to sit down over some sewing at the door. The young man took a pad and pencil and began to sketch her. She felt his eyes upon her and broke in upon his work with a question:

"May I ask what you're doing?"

"I'm drawing you."

"What for?"

"Because I'm a painter and take an interest in everything beautiful."

She gave him a pitying smile, shrugged her shoulders and went on with her work. After an hour, she got up and went to look over the young man's shoulder.

"Do I really look like that?" she asked him, laughing.

"This is just a preliminary sketch. If you'll allow me, I'll come back to finish it tomorrow. Meanwhile, how much do I owe you for lunch?"

"You can pay when you come back."

As soon as the artist got back to the rectory, he shut himself up in his room to work. The next day he worked until noon, when he went out, locking his room door behind him.

For the next two afternoons he went to the Pheasant and then no more, for he had reached another stage of his work. For three whole days he remained in his room and then, in agreement with the mason, started work in the chapel. No one could see what he was doing, because a board partition had been thrown up to protect him from the public view.

Don Camillo was consumed with curiosity, but he contained himself and did no more than ask every evening: "How's it going?"

"You'll soon see," said the young man excitedly.

Finally the great day came. The young man put a cloth over the fresco and tore down the boarding. Don Camillo rushed to the rail and waited, with his heart pounding. Then the young man took a pole and lifted the cloth off his "Madonna Of The River."

It was a most impressive painting, and Don Camillo stared at it with his mouth hanging open. Then suddenly something caught at his heart and perspiration broke out on his forehead.

"Celestina!" he shouted. "The daughter of the tavern-keeper at La Rocca!"

"Yes," said the young man calmly. "She's a girl I found at the Pheasant Tavern."

Don Camillo took hold of a ladder, carried it over to the far end of the chapel, climbed up and draped the cloth over the fresco.

The young man couldn't imagine what was wrong. "Father, are you out of your head?" he asked him, but Don Camillo only ran back to the rectory, with the young man at his heels.

"SACRILEGE!" he panted, once he had reached his own study. "Celestina from the Pheasant Tavern! You mean you don't know about Celestina? She's the most ardent Communist anywhere around. To present her face as that of the Madonna is like painting Jesus Christ in the likeness of Stalin."

"Father," said the artist, recovering some of his calm, "I was inspired not by her political beliefs but by her beauty. She has a lovely face, and that was given her by God, not by the Party."

"But the black soul behind it came straight from the Devil!" shouted Don Camillo. "Can't you see the sacrilege involved? That portrait represents a damned soul. The only fitting title for it is 'The Excommunicated Madonna'!"

In distress, the artist went to throw himself on his bed and did not come down to supper. About ten o'clock, Don Camillo went up to see him.

"Well, are you awake now to the sacrilege you have committed? I hope that a second look at your sketches has revealed to you the essential vulgarity of that face. You're a young man and she's a provocative girl. She

The young man could not understand what was wrong. Don Camillo stood staring at the picture, his mouth wide open, then gave a sudden shout: "Celestina!"

spoke to your senses, and your artistic discrimination went by the board."

"Father, you're misjudging and insulting me."

"Just let's look at your sketches together!"

"I've torn them all up."

"Then let's have another look at the chapel."

They went down to the empty church and Don Camillo took the pole to pull down the cloth covering the fresco.

"Look at it calmly and tell me if I'm not right."

The artist turned two powerful lights on the painting and shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Father," he said, "but there's nothing wanton or vulgar in that face."

Don Camillo stared at it again, scowling. The expression of the Madonna Of The River was calm and serene; her eyes were pure and clear.

"Incredible!" he exclaimed. "I don't know how you managed to get anything spiritual out of that creature."

"Then you admit that my picture has a spiritual and not a vulgar quality about it!"

"Yes, but Celestina hasn't. And anyone looking at it can't help saying: 'There's Celestina playing the part of the Madonna.'"

"Well, don't take it so tragically, Father. Tomorrow I can destroy it and start all over again."

"We'll decide that tomorrow," said Don Camillo. "As a painting it's stupendous. It would be a crime to wipe it off the wall. . . ."

Indeed, this "Madonna Of The River" was one of the most stunning things Don Camillo had ever seen. But how could he tolerate Celestina in the guise of Our Lady?

Next day he called five or six of his most trusted parishioners together, unveiled the fresco before them and asked for their honest opinion. Without exception they exclaimed:

"Marvellous!" and then a second later: "But that's Celestina from the Pheasant Tavern!"

Don Camillo told them of the painter's misadventure and concluded: "There's only one thing to do: wipe the whole thing out!"

"Too bad, because it's a masterpiece. Of course, it wouldn't do for our Madonna to have an excommunicated Communist's face. . . ."

Don Camillo begged the members of this little group not to say a word and as a result the story spread like wildfire.

PEOPLE began to pour into the church, but the fresco was draped with a cloth and the entrance to the chapel barred. The news travelled outside the village and that evening, when Don Camillo was closing up the church, he detected in the shadows the malicious face of Celestina in person.

"What do you want?" he asked gruffly.

"I want to see that idiot of a painter," she told him, and just then the idiot came upon the scene.

"Apart from the fact that you ate four meals at the tavern without paying for them," Celestina said threateningly. "I'd like to know who gave you permission to misuse my face!"

The young man looked at her in amazement: here indeed was the face of which Don Camillo had spoken. He wondered how in the world he had seen anything spiritual in it.

"You have no right to exploit my face and pin it on to a Madonna!" the girl exclaimed.

"No one's exploited you," said Don Camillo. "In any case, the fresco is going to be scraped away."

"I want to see it!" Celestina shouted. "And I want to be present when you take my face out of it!"

Don Camillo looked at her ugly expression and thought of the gentle face of the "Madonna Of The River."

"It isn't your face," he said. "Come and see for yourself."

The girl walked quickly to the chapel and came to a halt in front of the rail. Don Camillo took the pole and removed the cloth cover. Then he looked at Celestina. As she stood motionless, staring up at the picture, something extraordinary happened. Her face relaxed, her eyes lost their malice and became gentler and more serene. The vulgarity disappeared, and gradually she seemed to take on the expression of the painting.

The artist gripped Don Camillo's arm. "That's how I saw her!" he exclaimed.

Don Camillo motioned to him to be silent. A few moments later Celestina said in a low voice: "How beautiful!"

She could not take her eyes off the picture, and finally she turned to say to Don Camillo: "Please don't destroy it. Or at least, not too soon." And, to his surprise, she knelt down in front of the "Madonna Of The River" and made the sign of the Cross.

When Don Camillo was left alone in the church, he covered the fresco and then went to talk to the Crucified Christ over the main altar.

"Lord, what's going on?" he asked anxiously.

"Painting's not my business," answered Christ with a smile.

NEXT morning the young artist rode off on his bicycle to La Rocca. The tavern was empty, as usual, and Celestina sat, leaning over her sewing, at the door.

"I came to pay what I owe you," said the young man.

She raised her head, and he felt better because she wore the gentle and serene expression of the painting.

"You're a real artist!" she sighed. "That Madonna is a beauty. It would be a shame to take her away."

"I quite agree. I put my heart and soul into her, but people say an excommunicated Madonna won't do."

"I'm not excommunicated any longer," said Celestina with a smile. "I fixed that up this morning." And she proceeded to explain what steps she had taken.

Then she took advantage of the young man's surprise to ask whether it was his wife who kept his clothes so well mended and in such good order. He said that it wasn't, because he lived all alone and had no one to look after him. She observed with a sigh that, after a certain age, living alone was a tedious affair, even when a girl had any number of suitors. The time came when the thing to do was to settle down and have a family.

He agreed on this point, but said that he had barely enough money to support himself. That, said Celestina, was because he lived in the city, where things were twice as expensive. If he were to move to the country, life would be much simpler, especially if he found a girl with a little house of her own and a parcel of land that only needed further development.

He started to say something else, but just then the clock rang out noon. Celestina went to fetch the usual bread, sausage and wine, and when he had finished eating he asked her:

"How much do I owe you?"

"You can pay tomorrow," she answered.

The "Madonna Of The River" remained concealed for about a month longer. But on the day when the artist and Celestina were married, with all possible splendour, including organ music, Don Camillo drew the curtain and threw on the lights in the chapel. He was slightly worried about what people might say about the Madonna's resemblance to Celestina. But their only comment was:

"Celestina must wish she were equally beautiful! But she doesn't really look like Her at all!"

## BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

THEY had met dozens of times in the People's Palace, marched side by side in parade, gone out as a team to collect signatures for the Peace Crusade and other devilries of the same kind, and so it was natural enough that things should come spontaneously to a head one summer evening.

"It seems to me we two work pretty smoothly together," Marco said to the

**"What difference does it make if we're of opposite sexes," Marco said seriously, "as long as our ideals are the same?"**

girl as they came out of the People's Palace.

"I think so too," Giulietta admitted.

They didn't say anything more, but the next evening Marco went over to Brusco's house to call for Giulietta. Then they went to sit together on the bridge that spanned the Po River.

That was how it all began and everyone found it the most logical thing in the world. Marco and Brusco's daughter did indeed seem to be made for one another. They were of the same age and had the same wild ideas, and if Giulietta was the prettiest girl in the village, Marco was certainly an up-and-coming young man.

Both of them were so bitten by the political bug that they thought of practically nothing else.

"Marco," said Giulietta, "I like you because you're different from other boys. You talk to me as if I weren't just a mere woman."

"Giulietta," he answered, "what difference does it make if we're of opposite sexes, as long as our ideals are the same?"

They continued into the autumn to meet four evenings a week on the bridge. Finally, one time when it was pouring with rain, Giulietta's mother met Marco at the door and said he and Giulietta might as well come on to the porch for shelter.

And then, when winter came, she suggested that they'd better come into the house.

When Marco came into the kitchen, she pointed to a chair near the cupboard and said: "Sit down."

After that, she motioned her daughter into a matching chair on the other side of the cupboard and returned to the seat where she had been knitting, in front of the fire.

Giulietta and Marco went quietly on with the conversation they had begun on the porch.

Some two hours later, Marco went away and Giulietta took herself off to bed. Her mother didn't say a word, but she thought plenty, and when Brusco came home she let off steam.

"That young man came to the house," she told him.

"Did he?" asked Brusco. "And what do you think of him?"

"He's a poor wretch, that's what I think."

"He's a good boy, a boy with a head on his shoulders," said Brusco. "I know him well."

"I say he's a wretched creature," his wife repeated. "For two whole hours they talked of nothing but politics: political parties, party papers, Russia, America and other such ridiculous things. And she lapped it up! Poor wretches, both of them, that's what I say. Chattering about politics doesn't lead anyone to get married. Marriage means starting a family, not a political party. No, I don't like the fellow at all."

"Well, you don't have to marry him," said Brusco, starting upstairs. "The main thing is that he's a thoroughly good boy."

"No one that belongs to your godless party can be a good boy!"

"Well, your daughter belongs to my godless party, too," Brusco countered. "And isn't she a good girl?"

"She's not my daughter, she's yours!" answered his wife, throwing out her arms in despair.

As she thrashed about in her bed, trying vainly to sleep, a suspicion came into her mind. Perhaps they had talked about those ridiculous things simply because she was there. When they were alone, they might talk of something completely different.

She decided to put this suspicion to the test. When Marco next came to call she said she was dead tired and supposedly went up to bed. Once upstairs, she lifted up a board which she had previously loosened from the floor, and was able to hear everything they were saying below.

Marco and Giulietta talked quietly for some ten minutes or so, then Marco raised his voice to say: "Now your mother's gone to bed, we can talk more freely. I say that if we go on with the half-way methods of Peppone and your father, we'll never get anywhere. We've got to get tough with the landowners if we want results."

"I agree with you a hundred per cent," said Giulietta gravely. "Next time there's a meeting, we'll have to let them know what's what. They're getting old, and you can't expect them to have any flexibility in their thinking."

Upstairs, the woman held her breath. This was even wilder talk than that of the night before. But it was so boring that she couldn't keep her eyes open, and when Brusco came up he found her asleep, with her ear glued to the floor.

"Fine ideas they have, those two!" she exclaimed, pulling herself together. "If you want to know, your daughter told that wretched boy that you and Peppone are old fogies and the landowners twist you around their fingers."

"These young people are full of enthusiasm," said Brusco, shaking his head, "but of course they carry everything to extremes. And as far as Peppone and myself are concerned, we're in perfect harmony with the Party."

Things went on in very much the same way, but Brusco's wife had lost all interest in Giulietta and her young man. Whenever he appeared upon the scene, she simply said: "Here comes the committee!"

Finally something different did happen, and it was brought about by Giulietta. One evening she came late to supper, waving a magazine open at a photograph of herself.

"Look at this!" she shouted. "I'm in the finals!"

Brusco looked at the magazine and passed it over to his wife. "What's it all about?"

"It's the contest for 'Miss New Life,'" Giulietta said excitedly. "I'm in the final round."

Her mother looked again at the magazine and shook her head uncomprehendingly.

"Anyone can see," said Giulietta. "*New Life* is our Party magazine and it runs a contest every year. I'm one of the eight called to Rome this year for the final selection."

There was still something her mother didn't understand. "What sort of a contest is it?"

"A beauty contest, of course!" Giulietta exclaimed.

The woman turned to her husband. "Are you letting your daughter get her picture into print and then show herself off in Rome?"

Brusco shrugged his shoulders. "Don't turn it into a tragedy," he said. "There are plenty of contests of this kind, and I don't see anything the matter with them. Haven't there been beauty queens as long as we can remember?"

"There've been no-good girls as long as we can remember, too," said his wife, "but that doesn't mean we have to encourage ours to be one."

"Don't be stupid, Mother!" cried Giulietta angrily.

The woman looked at her husband, but he went on eating. Finally she got up and went upstairs. Brusco wolfed down the rest of his supper and went off to a meeting.

Giulietta cleared the table, washed the dishes and sat down to wait for Marco. This was his regular evening, and he arrived promptly.

"Have you seen this?" she said at once, showing him the magazine.

"Yes, I have," he answered. "When do you go to Rome?"

"On the twentieth, it says here. That's just four days away."

"It's a long trip," Marco observed. "Four hundred miles! And all expenses paid. It's the opportunity of a lifetime to see the city."

Marco agreed that it was an opportunity. "But this whole idea of a beauty contest has something terribly bourgeois about it," he added.

"Beauty isn't a bourgeois monopoly," laughed Giulietta. "Beauty's universal. The contest will prove there are plenty of pretty girls in the Party, much prettier than your bourgeois young ladies. If the contest didn't have a serious purpose, the Party wouldn't permit it."

Marco agreed that the Party was always right. "But, personally, I'm a little sorry that you sent in your picture."

"Marco," she said severely, "what silly talk is this? Are you giving in to ordinary masculine conventions?"

"Forgive me, Giulietta," Marco said, blushing. "To tell the truth, I have feelings I've never had before. You see, I——I——"

Giulietta gave a sarcastic laugh.

"Control yourself, Comrade, or you'll turn into one of those idiots that lose their head every time they see a pretty girl. And I don't want you to disappoint me. After you've led me to believe you were different from other men and capable of a platonic friendship, please don't show yourself up as the other kind."

"Giulietta!" cried Marco, turning very pale. "Now you've hurt my feelings. I'm only asking whether, for my sake, you're not willing to give up the trip to Rome. Why do you care about being the *New Life* beauty queen, when you're the queen of my heart?"

Giulietta stared at him in disgust.

"You fool!" she shouted.

Marco turned even more pale, and came towards her, attempting to grasp her hand.

"Go away, and don't hurry back!" shouted Giulietta, pushing him back roughly and pointing to the door.

Marco lowered his head and started to go. But he wasn't really such a fool; in fact, he was a young man of considerable character.

So it was that he wheeled around and said sternly:

"Giulietta, I forbid you to go to Rome. I won't have you taking part in a beauty contest."

Giulietta planted herself in front of him with her hands on her hips. "Forbid me?" she shouted. "Who do you think you are?"

"I'm somebody that loves you," said Marco, losing his usual self-possession. "I'm not the kind that puts his wife on public display."

Giulietta looked him straight in the eye. "Instead of waiting four days, I'm going tomorrow," she said defiantly, "and I'll appear before the jury in a bathing-suit. I have a new one right here in the drawer, if you want to see it. In two pieces. . . ."

She could not finish because Marco tore the package out of her hands, threw the contents on the floor and stamped on them.

"There are plenty more where that came from," said Giulietta angrily. "You'll see my picture in a bathing-suit in all the papers. Now get out."

Marco was beside himself with rage and despair. Reaching out, he grabbed Giulietta by the neck, so that she could barely breathe. The girl couldn't even cry out, because fright had caused her to faint away. . . .

When Giulietta came to, she was sitting on the floor and Marco was watching over her. She didn't yet know what had happened, because her head felt quite empty. No wonder, for in his hands Marco held a pair of scissors, and with them he had shorn all the long, silky hair from her head. Now he threw the scissors at her feet.

"Go to Rome, if you like," he said fiercely. And he disappeared through the doorway.

Lying on the floor of their upstairs room, Brusco's wife had, through the

aperture left by the removed board, followed every detail of the scene.

"I told you he was a good boy, didn't I?" murmured Brusco, who had sneaked home by the back door and was now on watch beside his wife.

The next day the whole village had heard about the shearing. In the river country of the little world everyone knows everyone else's business.

Giulietta stayed at home all day, but after supper she went to sit on the side of the bridge. It was a magnificent August evening, with an enormous moon in the sky, and the first passer-by could see Giulietta's appearance quite clearly. He ran to spread the news, and soon a whole procession of people came by. And at the end came Marco. He stood there hesitatingly until Giulietta said:

"Well, aren't you coming to see the show?"

Marco swallowed hard and then said: "Giulietta, if you want your revenge, take it right away. Shoot me."

"Shoot you?" said Giulietta in amazement. "If I shoot you while I'm like this, where can I find another fool ready to marry me right away?"

Giulietta wore a Party-approved grey tailored suit and a blouse with a black bow to the wedding, and when Don Camillo found this strange pair standing before him he looked in perplexity from one to the other, with his eyes coming to a pause on Giulietta's shorn head.

"Which one of you is the groom?" he asked.

"He is," sighed Giulietta, covering her baldness with a veil.

**Brusco's wife listened closely. So this was what the youngsters talked about. How very boring!**

# PEPPONE GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

WHEN Peppone decided to go all out against clerical interference in the primary schools, an announcement to this effect came out in the bulletin nailed to the wall of the People's Palace. In it was the proposal that a supervisory committee be set up and empowered to visit the schools at any time to make sure that the teaching was in accord with democratic principles.

Of course, the next day, the bulletin of the Opposition printed a reply:

> "We don't for a moment criticize our Mayor for the fact that he never finished school. We believe that ideas are much more important than good grammar. But, for purposes of the present discussion, we must note that it seems singularly inappropriate for primary instruction to be in the hands of someone who never finished his own. Let the Mayor hand over this job to Smilzo, who stayed two years in first grade and three years in both second and third, thus acquiring considerably more experience in the field of education."

This piece caused considerable talk in the village, and Don Camillo made a copy of it which he took to read to the Christ over the altar.

"I am still of the same opinion," Christ told him. "This was written by a man just as stupid as the one who pencilled the word 'Donkey!' on the margin of some other declaration by Peppone."

"But, Lord," Don Camillo objected, "this is an entirely different matter. Isn't it stupid of a man with one leg to insist on entering a race?"

"Don Camillo, you're not playing fair! A man with only one leg can't acquire another in its place, but a man who doesn't know grammar can always learn it. If you know the person who wrote these words, tell him that they are very stupid."

"I'll try to explain," said Don Camillo, throwing out his arms, "but it's going to be uphill work."

Peppone couldn't take the counter-attack lying down, and so he brought out another broadside:

> "We can confidantly state that if our unknown adversary were to look after his priestly affairs instead of the affairs of other people, it would be a very good thing. There are two kinds of ignorance: the ignorance of those who for obvious reasons have not been able to continue their schooling, and that of persons like the ignorant priest in question, who has studied a great deal but learned nothing."

This was only the beginning, and the rest was couched in much grosser terms. When Don Camillo went to kneel in front of the altar, Christ asked him if he had read Peppone's new innuendo.

"Yes, Lord."

"And have you resisted the temptation to reply?"

"Yes, Lord."

"Will you be able to keep up your resistance?"

Don Camillo threw out his arms. "The future is in God's hands," he answered.

"But the draft of your reply is in your right hand pocket, and so in this case the future is in the hands of Don Camillo."

Don Camillo took the sheet of paper out of his pocket with a sigh and put it to the flame of a candle. . . .

When Peppone was beside himself with political passion, he proceeded with about as much delicacy as a Sherman tank, and so, naturally enough, this piece of prose, which began with the famous "confidantly," was full of errors. People laughed immoderately at it, even without any instigation on the part of Don Camillo, and Peppone's pride was deeply injured. He dropped the fight for a supervisory committee and fastened his energies upon the fulfilment of a very ambitious dream.

No one except his wife knew anything about it. Every evening, when he set off on his motor-cycle, she gave an anxious sigh, and towards midnight, when he returned, she immediately asked: "How did you do?"

"It's hard going, but I'll make it."

This went on for three and a half months, until one night, upon his return from the mysterious trip, Peppone announced: "This is it! I'm taking the plunge!"

"What if you don't succeed?"

"I must, that's all. I'm putting in an application tomorrow."

"Well, be sure not to make any mistakes in the application!"

"You don't need to worry about that," Peppone reassured her. "I've got the application all ready. They typed it for me in the city!"

"*I, Giuseppe Bottazzi, etc., etc., respectfully ask permission of the Board of Education to take the eighth-grade examinations. . . .*"

The bomb burst with a noise almost atomic in intensity. Don Camillo burned with eagerness to talk to Peppone and size up his new education, but Peppone seemed to be avoiding him. This exasperated his curiosity all the more. Finally he did get hold of him, by means of a personal visit to the workshop. Peppone greeted him with gentlemanly indifference.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

"I was just passing by," said Don Camillo, "and wanted to inquire about the health of our mayor."

"There's no mayor here. Here you have only Giuseppe Bottazzi, the blacksmith, descendant of the blacksmith of the same name who brought the family to this village several centuries ago and was beheaded because he stripped a priest of his ill-gotten gains. There's the nemesis of history for you!"

"The nemesis of history? How do you mean?" asked Don Camillo in utter astonishment.

"I mean that maybe this time there'll be a different ending and Giuseppe Bottazzi will not only strip the priest of his ill-gotten gains, but kill him!"

"Ill-gotten gains? But I have no more money than a jumping jack-rabbit!"

"I'm not speaking of money. You've captured the confidence of a great many ignorant people, and we shall take it away!"

The conversation was taking an unpleasant turn, but Don Camillo swallowed his pride for the sake of acquiring further information.

"What will be, will be," he said. "How about the examinations?"

"Trifles!" answered Peppone. "The important examination is the one I take every day with this hammer and anvil. And I pass it, time after time."

Don Camillo went home in a gloomy state of mind. "Lord," he said to Christ over the altar, "that poor fellow is so swollen with pride that he deserves to fail every single subject."

"I don't know about that, Don Camillo. I'm not on the examination committee. That's for them to decide."

THE day came. Peppone, in a radiant mood, put on his best suit, filled his fountain-pen, tested it on a piece of paper and started to leave the house.

"I'll go with you as far as the school," his wife suggested.

"Don't let's be silly about it!" said Peppone.

"Your son insists on going," she told him.

"Don't make me look ridiculous; I'd seem like a schoolboy, and all those wretched people will be staring out of their windows at me."

And so Peppone went off alone, but when he reached the school, his wife and son were already there, lurking behind a hedge, all red in the face from having to run across the fields to beat him. As he started up the steps into the schoolhouse, they waved to him and he waved back with his hand hidden halfway down his back.

A special commission had been set up to examine Peppone. It consisted of the director of the Board of Education and two teachers from another township—a stiff, elderly woman and a middle-aged man.

They welcomed him with icy politeness. "Sit down," said the director. "You will have written examinations in arithmetic and composition. Remember that the allotted time is four hours." They set before him four sheets of officially stamped examination paper, two for a rough copy and two for the finished product.

"Shall we begin?" asked the director, after Peppone had sat down and taken out his pen.

"By all means," said Peppone.

"Then take this down: 'Problem: A cement basin of parallelepiped form has a base forty by sixty centimetres in size and is fed by two taps. The first tap pours in eight litres of water a minute and the second tap five litres of water every other minute. In thirty minutes the flow from the second tap alone fills two-fifths of the basin. How long will it take to fill the whole basin if both taps are open? How high is the basin?'"

As Peppone diligently wrote down the problem, he noticed that his hand had begun to tremble. I shouldn't have done so much hammering last night, he said to himself. It has tired my hand.

MEANWHILE, the examiners told him to take down the composition theme. "'Theme: Narrate some event, either recent or long ago, which made a strong impression upon you.'"

Peppone took this down with some difficulty, for his hand continued to tremble. Then he ran a handkerchief over his perspiring forehead. He looked over the two sheets, and re-read the arithmetic problem. A parallelepiped—what the devil was that? Two minutes earlier, he had known perfectly well, but now it had gone out of his head completely. The tap whose flow sufficed to fill two-thirds of the basin filled him with confusion. What could be meant by two-fifths of a parallelepiped? And what about the other tap, which poured in water continuously?

His head was empty, as he looked again at the theme for a composition. What was an event? What events had he witnessed, and how could he tell the story of any one of them? He thought back to his night school classes, but not a single word could he recapture. Then he thought of his wife and son waiting for him outside, and there was an ache in his heart.

The three examiners sat around a table at the far end of the room, as stiff as statues. Peppone wiped the perspiration off his brow. The clock in the church tower struck ten. How perfectly terrible! He had barely written down the questions, and it was ten o'clock already. And those damned taps were still pouring water into that damned parallelepiped!

The old charwoman brought the news to the rectory. "Father, I saw him with my own eyes. He's been staring for a whole hour and a half at the paper, and perspiring as if he had a high fever. Not a single word has he written!"

Don Camillo listened to her with satisfaction. "That's what he gets for being so stuck-up," he exclaimed.

"He looked just like a schoolboy," the old gossip continued. "He came up the road alone, but he got his wife and son to walk along parallel to him, behind the hedge."

With that, the charwoman went away, promising to come back later. She came at eleven o'clock, even more excited than before.

"Things are still exactly the same," she reported. "He's still perspiring, and still staring at the paper. His wife and child are still hiding behind the hedge. She's chewed up half a handkerchief, she's so nervous. Father, I only wish you could see the state that big bully is in now!"

And Don Camillo thought he had every right to see the big bully brought so low.

The two strokes of half-past eleven

rang out, and Peppone was thinking that he had only an hour and a half more. Just then the charwoman came to call the director. The director went out into the hall and met Don Camillo.

"Excuse me," said the priest, "but even if the mayor is playing schoolboy he can't neglect his municipal duties. There's a poor woman who may die if he doesn't sign the papers authorizing her immediate removal to hospital." And he held out a sheet of paper, adding: "Will you give it to him?"

"That's not regular," the director stammered.

"I know, but it would be still more irregular for a poor woman to die simply in order not to disturb an examination. I don't think this will upset your examinee."

The director shrugged his shoulders. "All right. I'll send him out here and let you give it to him in person."

Don Camillo glimpsed the sad state of Peppone and calmly waited for him. Meanwhile, after Peppone had heard what the director had to say, he slowly got up and came out into the hall.

"Forgive me, Mr. Mayor," said Don Camillo, "but it's an urgent matter."

Peppone took the sheet of paper and read:

"I, Angiolina Pateri, widow, without means of support, state as follows. . . ."

"I've already told you that I can't do anything for her," he said, handing the paper back to Don Camillo. "I had this same statement in my hands two weeks ago."

"Two weeks ago, things were different," Don Camillo shot back at him. "Please read on. Here you have the notarized signature of the doctor."

Just then the director came out into the hall again. "Mr. Mayor," he said, "since you're called upon to decide an important matter, this time won't be counted."

"Thank you," said Don Camillo. "I shouldn't want to have on my conscience the theft of time from a mathematics exercise or a literary masterpiece."

Peppone gritted his teeth and shot a bitter glance at Don Camillo.

"Come, Mr. Mayor, hurry!"

Peppone reopened the paper and scrutinized the declaration:

"The undersigned certifies that Angiolina Pateri is in a desperate condition and must be sent away for a surgical intervention; *meanwhile, ten minutes from now, you ask for permission to go to the toilet.*"

He re-read the last two lines, fearing that he had misunderstood them. Then he looked at Don Camillo and asked: "Why?"

"If the doctor says so, then it's got to be done," answered Don Camillo. "Just sign here."

Peppone signed the paper and handed it back. When he returned to the classroom, the commission took note of the hour.

Ten minutes went by, and then suddenly Peppone raised the thumb and forefinger of his right hand.

"Go ahead," said the director. "And smoke a cigarette while you're there, if you like. We'll subtract the time."

Peppone walked unsteadily to the toilet, which was at the end of a long hall. A window looked out over some empty fields.

"Psst!"

Peppone pushed his face up to the grating over the window. Just below, there was a pile of dried grass and sticks, and this was the source of the whistle.

"Hurry up, you jackass! Light a cigarette and pretend to take it easy. Quick, tell me the problem!"

Peppone told him the problem between one puff of smoke and another. "Parallelepiped . . . basin . . . forty by sixty centimetres. . . ."

"What's forty by sixty centimetres?" came the voice from outside.

"The base . . . two taps . . . one eight litres a minute . . . other five litres every two minutes, but in thirty minutes fills two-fifths of the basin. . . ."

"And what do they want to know?"

"How long it would take to fill the basin with both taps running. And the height of the parellelepiped."

"Jackass! That's child's play."

Don Camillo proceeded to explain to him. "Do you get it?" he said in conclusion.

"No, but now that you've given me a hint, I'll try to think it out."

"Get back there then!"

Peppone jumped. "How about the composition?"

"What's the theme?"

"An event which made a strong impression on me."

"Well, you'll have to work that out yourself. What do I know of your affairs?"

"But I can't remember a single thing! What shall I write about?"

From the pile of grass came a suggestion, and Peppone took it back with him to the classroom. He thought hard over what Don Camillo had told him about the arithmetic problem, and having caught on to the general idea he was able to work it out on paper. He was still perspiring, but in a different way. And the trembling of his hand was not the same, either.

The director's voice aroused him: "It's one o'clock and we're allowing you ten minutes for each of the two interruptions. You've only twenty minutes left."

Peppone fell once more into a panic. Twenty minutes to make clean copies of both the problem and the composition. He looked around in search of help and his eye fell on the clock in the church tower.

"It isn't yet one o'clock," he exclaimed. "It's twenty minutes to."

The examiners remarked that the hands of the classroom clock pointed to one.

"But I came with the tower clock and it's only fair that I leave with it too."

"Very good," said the director, who wanted above all to have everything proceed smoothly.

Peppone copied first the problem and then the composition and when the tower clock pointed to one-eighteen he handed in both papers.

Don Camillo was watching with a spyglass from the bell tower, and when he saw Peppone coming down the steps he adjusted the mechanism of the clock.

"Now try to catch up on those twenty minutes I set you back!" he murmured. Looking out again through his spyglass, he saw Peppone jump over the hedge and start home with his wife and son.

"Wretched creature!" the priest murmured. "I wonder if at the oral examinations tomorrow you'll find another shady character to help you the way I did today!"

But the next day Peppone did very well without any help whatsoever and the old woman teacher felt impelled to say: "Allow me to congratulate you not only on your thorough preparation but on your good manners and sensitivity as well."

Her fellow-examiner and the director both agreed, and Peppone went triumphantly home, not across the fields this time but down the street, with his head held high.

Don Camillo sat in the church square, smoking his usual cigar butt, and Peppone marched over to him.

"Did you get your diploma?" Don Camillo asked.

"Yes," said Peppone gloomily. "But you were your usual perfidious self to suggest 'The Day of my First Communion' as the subject for a composition. I was down and out, and you took advantage of me."

"I can see that it puts you in real danger," admitted Don Camillo. "If Malenkov comes this way and this composition gets into his files, then you're done for! That's what you get for your pursuit of culture!"

After Peppone had gone, Don Camillo walked into the church. As he was passing in front of the main altar, Christ's voice stopped him. "Where were you yesterday morning, Don Camillo?" Christ asked. "You were away from here for some time."

"Lord, please let it go by for the moment. Later on we'll draw up accounts, and I'll pay up what I have to pay."

"You're shamefully lucky, Don Camillo," Christ said with a sigh. "Even when that time comes you'll find Someone to overlook what you owe Him and give you more credit."

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," said Don Camillo, throwing out his arms. Then he remembered how Peppone's wife and child had waited for him behind the hedge.

"I did it for the sake of those two, Lord," he said.

"For the sake of those three," Christ corrected him.

"Oh, well, one more or less doesn't matter," concluded Don Camillo.

The examiners sat as stiff as statues. Peppone sweated in anguish: his mind was quite blank. Precious minutes ticked by

## THE BEST MEDICINE

People couldn't get over the fact that Don Camillo was in such a state over Thunder. "After all," they said, "a dog's only a dog." But it's the last straw that breaks the camel's back. And at this time, that was Don Camillo's situation.

The day before the official opening of the shooting season, Thunder went out of the house about midday and failed to return in the evening. He didn't turn up the next day, either, and Don Camillo searched wildly for him until nightfall. When he came home empty-handed, he was too miserable to eat supper.

Somebody's stolen him, he thought to himself, and by this time he's probably in Piedmont or Tuscany. Then suddenly he heard the door creak, and there was Thunder. It was obvious from his humble look that he was aware of having done something very bad. He didn't have the nerve to come all the way in, but stood half outside, with only his nose sticking around beyond the door.

"Come in!" shouted Don Camillo, but the dog did not budge. "Thunder, come here!" the priest shouted again.

The order was so definite that Thunder obeyed, coming forward very slowly, with his head hanging low. When he reached Don Camillo's feet, he stopped and waited. This was the last straw. For it was then that Don Camillo discovered that someone had painted Thunder's hindquarters bright red.

Nothing could have been more cowardly. Don Camillo felt a grinding pain deep down inside and had to go and take a breath of fresh air at the window. There his anger passed away, giving place to melancholy. He leaned over to touch the dog's back and found the paint already dry. Evidently it had been applied the day before and Thunder had been afraid to come home.

"Poor fellow," said Don Camillo. "You were caught just like an innocent puppy."

Then he stopped to think that Thunder wasn't the kind of dog to let strangers get too near him or to fall for the offer of a chunk of meat. He trusted only two people, and one of these was Don Camillo. . . .

Peppone was still in his workshop

when Don Camillo appeared, like a ghost, before him, with Thunder at his side. He went on hammering.

"Peppone, have you any idea how Thunder got into this condition?"

Peppone looked over at the dog and shrugged his shoulders. "How should I know? Perhaps he sat down on some bench that was freshly painted."

"That could be," said Don Camillo calmly. "But I have a notion you're mixed up in it."

Peppone grinned. "I'm a blacksmith and mechanic," he said. "The dry cleaner's the other side of the square."

"But the fellow who asked me to lend him my dog to go hunting and then painted the dog red because I refused him is right here before me!"

Peppone dropped his hammer and stood before Don Camillo aggressively, hands on hips. "What do you mean?"

"That your revenge was abject and unworthy!"

Don Camillo was panting with indignation. He heard Peppone shout something at him but could not catch the words. His head was whirling strangely and he groped for the anvil in order to keep his balance.

Peppone eyed him coldly. "If you've been drinking, you'd better go and sleep it off in the rectory."

Don Camillo managed to grasp this last sentence and started reeling home, where he arrived without knowing how he had done so.

Half an hour later, the sacristan found him stretched out on the rectory floor with Thunder howling beside him.

The priest was bundled into an ambulance and taken to a hospital in the city. And the villagers did not go to bed before the ambulance came back and they had some news.

"Nobody knows what's wrong," said the driver. "It seems as if his heart and liver and nervous system were all involved. Then he must have given his head a nasty crack when he fell. All the way to the city he was delirious, raving about how someone had painted his dog red."

"Poor Don Camillo!" the villagers murmured as they went to bed.

NEXT day, they found out that the dog really had been touched up and that Don Camillo's raving was by no means as delirious as it had seemed.

Every evening someone brought back the latest news from the city, and early every morning Thunder came to Peppone's workshop, lay down in the doorway and fixed his melancholy eyes upon Peppone. He stayed there until eight o'clock, when the square began to fill up with people going about their daily occupations.

Peppone paid him very little attention, but after this performance had been repeated for twenty-five days in succession, he lost patience and shouted: "Can't you let me alone? Your master's ill, that's all. If you want to know more than that, you'll have to go and see him."

The dog did not budge an inch, and Peppone still felt those melancholy eyes upon him. At seven o'clock he could not stand it any longer. He washed, put on his best suit, got on his motor-cycle and rode away.

After he had gone a mile, he stopped to see how he was off for petrol. He found the tank full, and proceeded to check the oil. A few seconds later, Thunder caught up with him, his tongue hanging out with exhaustion, and jumped into the sidecar.

"Devil take you and your master!" grumbled Peppone as he started the motor.

At eight o'clock, he arrived in front of the hospital and left Thunder to watch over the machine. But at the door they told him that it was entirely

**Don Camillo raised a hand to his mouth and spoke in a whisper. Peppone seemed horrified. "Father!" he protested, "that would be a crime!"**

too early for a visit. And when they heard which patient he wanted to see, they told him it was no use waiting. Don Camillo's case was so serious that no visitor was permitted.

Peppone did not insist. He remounted his motor-cycle and rode off to the Bishop's Palace. Here, too, he was refused admittance, but finally his persistence and his big hands caused the secretary to relent, and, a few seconds later, Peppone torpedoed his way into the garden where the bishop, older and tinier and whiter-haired than ever, was admiring the bright hues of the flowers. The old man held him off with the end of his cane.

"Forgive me, Your Grace," stammered Peppone, "but it's a serious matter."

"Speak up, Mr. Mayor. What's wrong?"

"It's Don Camillo. For over three weeks. . . ."

"I know all about it," the bishop interrupted. "I've been to see him already. Poor Don Camillo!" He sighed.

Peppone twisted his hat between his hands. "Something's got to be done, Your Grace."

"Only God Almighty can do it," said the bishop, throwing out his arms in resignation.

But Peppone had an idea of his own. "There's something you can do, Your Grace. You can say a Mass for his recovery, for instance."

The bishop looked at Peppone incredulously.

"Your Grace, please try to understand. I'm the one who painted his dog red."

The bishop did not answer, but walked down the garden path. At the far end of the path was his private chapel.

"Go down there and ask them for an altar boy," said the bishop.

Peppone shrugged his shoulders. "I can serve at the altar. I did it often enough as a boy. . . ."

"A very special Mass, with a very special altar boy," said the bishop. "Go on in and lock the door behind us. This is something that must remain strictly between ourselves. Or rather, between ourselves and God."

When Peppone left the Bishop's Palace, he found Thunder on guard in the sidecar. He jumped on to the saddle and rode back to the hospital. Again they were unwilling to let him in, but he bullied his way through.

Don Camillo had a room to himself. The room was flooded with light, and as Peppone opened the door, he drew back in alarm. Never had he imagined that twenty-five days of illness could lay a man so low. He tiptoed over to the bed. Don Camillo's eyes were closed and he seemed to be dead, but when he opened them he was very much alive.

"Have you come to claim an inheritance?" he said in a thin voice. "I have nothing to leave you but Thunder. . . . Every time you see that red behind of his, you can think of me. . . ."

"The red's almost all gone now," said Peppone, in a low voice with his head hanging. "I've scrubbed him with turpentine every day. He wanted to come and see you, but they won't let him in."

"Funny people they are," sighed Don Camillo. "They let you in, and you're much more of a dog than he."

Peppone nodded assent. "Sounds as if you were getting better. You're in high spirits, that much is certain."

"Soon they'll be so high that they'll carry me up into the blue beyond. I'm done for; my strength is all gone. I'm not even strong enough to be angry with you."

JUST then, a nurse came in with a bowl of broth. Don Camillo sipped at the broth, but once the nurse was out of the room he made a face.

"Soups and slops, for twenty-five days, without interruption. I'm beginning to feel as if I were a bird. . . ." And he looked down at his gaunt, white hands. "It's no use offering to match fists with you now."

"Don't let yourself worry," said Peppone, lowering his head.

Don Camillo slowly closed his eyes and seemed to fall asleep. Peppone waited for a few seconds and then started to go away, but Don Camillo reached out a hand to touch his arm.

"Peppone," he whispered, "are you a dastardly coward or an honest man?"

"I'm an honest man."

Don Camillo motioned to him to lower his head and whispered something into his ear. He must have said something very terrible, because Peppone seemed horrified.

"Father! That would be a crime!"

Don Camillo looked straight into his eyes. "Are you going to let me down?" he panted.

"I'm not letting anybody down," said Peppone. "Is it a request or an order?"

"An order!" murmured Don Camillo.

"Let your will be done!" Peppone whispered as he left the room.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, Peppone was back at the hospital. Smilzo, his henchman, was with him, and the attendants made an attempt to block the two of them at the door.

"It's a serious matter," exclaimed Peppone. "It's concerned with an inheritance. That's why I brought a notary along."

When they came to Don Camillo's door, Peppone said, "You stay out here and don't let anyone in. You can say that he's making his confession."

Don Camillo seemed to be asleep, but he was only dozing and quickly opened his eyes.

"Well then?" he asked anxiously.

"Everything's just as you wanted it," answered Peppone, "but I still say it's a crime."

"Are you afraid?"

"No."

Peppone proceeded to take a parcel out from under his jacket and unwrap it. He put the contents on the bedside table and then pulled Don Camillo into a sitting position, with the pillows at his back. He spread a napkin over the priest's lap and moved the contents of the parcel on to it: a loaf of fresh bread and a plate of sliced salami. Then he uncorked the bottle of red Lambrusco wine.

THE sick man ate and drank deliberately, not in order to prolong any gluttonous enjoyment but simply to get the full savour of his native earth. For you must realize that Lambrusco is no ordinary wine but something unique and particular to that section of the river valley. Every mouthful made him homesick for the river and the misty sky above it, the mooing of the cattle in their stalls, the distant thumping of tractors and the wail of threshing machines in the poplar-bordered fields.

All these seemed now to belong to another world, from which he had been taken away by a succession of malevolent medicines and insipid soups.

When he had finished his meal, he said to Peppone:

"Half a cigar!"

Peppone looked fearfully at Don Camillo, as if he might stiffen and die before him.

"No, not a cigar!"

Eventually he had to give in, but after a few puffs Don Camillo let the cigar drop to the floor and fell into a deep sleep.

Three days later, Don Camillo left the hospital, but he did not return to the village for three months, because he wanted to be in perfect health for his arrival.

When he did return, Thunder gave him a wildly enthusiastic welcome, turning around in circles and chasing his tail in order that Don Camillo might see that his hindquarters were in perfect condition.

Peppone, who happened to be passing in front of the rectory, was attracted by Thunder's barking and asked Don Camillo to note that there was not a trace of red left upon him.

"Quite so," said Don Camillo. "He's all right. Now to get the red off the rest of you dogs."

"You're yourself again, all right," mumbled Peppone. "Almost too much so, in my opinion."

*THE END*

# Alfred Morris boosts fashion with test-tube furs

*by RONALD W. CLARK*

**His fabulous looking "fur coats" are made to a chemist's formula. Women snap them up, Customs men may mistake them for the real thing, and Moscow wants them for the winter**

EARLY LAST YEAR, a robe of crimson chiffon velvet edged with a rich, fur-like, ermine-white trimming, was laid on a table in the office of the Earl Marshal, the Duke of Norfolk. The robe had been inspected in all lights and under all possible conditions of use. Technical experts reported on the quality of the white trimming and its probable appearance in Westminster Abbey.

Finally, the Earl Marshal nodded, and approval was given for a peeress's robe edged with a chemically produced material, rather than with animals' fur, to be worn at the Coronation.

"The robe was part of the first set of kirtle, robe and coronet trimmed with simulation fur specially ordered for the ceremony," says Alfred Morris, a third-generation furrier, who within the last six years has revolutionized the simulation fur trade.

The cost of the set was about £500 less than it would have been if the garments had been trimmed with real ermine. Once the Earl Marshal had given his approval, Morris and his employees, in a factory in County Durham, began to prepare simulation ermine for twenty more robes. Some of them were worn in the Abbey, many were displayed in Canada and the United States, and one was shown to the Norwegian Court by a leading British couturier.

South Americans ordered a number of similar robes for their *Mardi Gras* festivals. "We turned down the orders," says Morris. "We didn't think it right to export Coronation duplicates."

Morris, a short, dark, vigorous man who has cut and handled fur since he was twelve, opened his factory—the first in Britain to make mass-produced fur simulations from the new artificial fibres—in the development area near Shildon, County Durham. He took a six-man team of expert furriers from London, transformed the Shildon Working Men's Institute into a training centre, and gave local men and women an extensive course in handling fur. As the course expanded, nearby Nissen huts were taken over.

"To ensure that they learned the job properly, he kept the trainees at work on real furs for two years before he allowed them to handle his simulations," says one of Morris's staff. "Many of the workers are related to miners. Some of the 'furs' they make are of a material derived from coal."

## Russian Ordered Twelve Coats

Today, simulation furs are recognized as a serious competitor to furs made from animal skins. Morris has made simulation fur suits for the United States Navy, and has had orders from the Services of Scandinavian countries. A few weeks ago, a buyer from a Russian trade delegation in Britain walked into his showrooms in London and ordered a dozen full-length coats. "He wanted them sent by air to Moscow," says one of Morris's staff.

Morris once dressed a complete London cabaret in white "ermine" stoles for a fraction of the cost of real ermine. Some time ago, he provided a specially designed simulation fur coat for a Canadian living in the far north. Recently, a retired Guards colonel wrote suggesting that Morris should make simulation bearskins for Guardsmen. "It could be done," says Morris.

The bulk of his factory's output, however, is simulation fur coats designed for the women who can afford £30 but not £300. Soon after the war, he put on the market a range of "furs" under such names as Minkaleen, Ermaleen, Chinchaleen, Oceleen, Beaverleen and Astraleen, made of a "fur pile" material produced from rayon or cotton thread.

"They were accepted as fashion garments in their own right," says Morris, "even though in appearance they did not actually duplicate—except in colour—the natural skins from which they derived their names."

Then Morris heard of the work of Wilbur Cowie, a young scientist working for the Canadian Defence Research Board. Cowie had learned that Eskimos use caribou fur for clothing because it is warm, and wolverine fur for trimming their parka hoods because is is easy to de-frost. With two other scientists, he succeeded in making a nylon thread which combined the qualities of both furs.

## He Sat In Frost For An Hour

A suit was made, and Squadron Leader Scott Alexander, head of the Royal Canadian Air Force's Survival School, put it on. Wearing the suit and nothing else, Alexander sat for an hour on the steel trail of an army field gun in the cold chamber of the National Research Council—in seventy-five degrees of frost. He came out, not warm, but at least unharmed. The R.C.A.F. ordered five thousand yards of the material.

"When I heard of the Canadian experiments," says Morris, "I wondered why other new artificial fibres, of which we were just beginning to hear, should not be tailor-made to imitate the hair of particular animals."

Nowadays, in his showrooms in London, Morris displays long, rich rows of what appear to be fur coats worth hundreds of pounds. All have been developed either from Cowie's patents, which Morris obtained from the Canadian Government for his exclusive use, or from experiments which Morris has encouraged in Britain.

Customs men at London Airport will sometimes only pass his fur simulations in daylight, on the grounds that in artificial light it is impossible to distinguish them from real furs.

Simulation furs are being exported to Canada, the home of genuine furs. Leon Simons, Morris's export manager, took the first samples to Montreal last year. "At six in the afternoon I held a show of them," he says. "Two hours later, the head of a Montreal shop persuaded me to let him take most of the samples. That night the shop took out one of its main displays and re-dressed the window with the simulation fur coats. Within three days I had sold all the samples and was trying desperately to get more."

Morris had realized before this that his new "furs" were wanted by women. When he



**Models act as "guinea pigs" to test simulation furs at a cold storage plant. In another test, two girls went under a shower in "fur coats"**

Morris shows a fashion buyer a nutria fur (on the left) worth eight hundred guineas and a simulated nutria coat—priced at thirty-one guineas

delivered the first six nylon fur coats to a shop in Knightsbridge, London, they were sold within two hours. "From that moment," says Morris, "I had only one problem—that of getting enough of the raw material from which the simulations are made."

Virtually any fur can be reproduced, but each has to be tackled as a separate problem. A synthetic fibre, good for simulating ermine, may be of little use for simulating beaver. Nylon is best for some, and Terylene for others.

"Whenever he received a new specimen of simulation fur from the Yorkshire mill where it is produced for him, he would rush into the showrooms with it," one of his former model girls says of Morris. "He'd hand it round to us, saying: 'Isn't this one a beauty?'—and it usually was."

Each piece of fur pile fabric starts as a thread, many miles long, which is made from such raw materials as coal or oil.

It then goes to the mill. The thread is rewound and led, six hundred or more strands at a time, into looms. The fabric produced is then washed and dried and the strands brushed out according to the quality of finish required.

After it has been brushed, the pile looks surprisingly like real fur, but without its colour. It is then dyed, normally a hand operation in which the fabric is dipped into great cauldrons of dye. When special simulations are to be produced, however, the fabric lengths are dealt with individually by skilled workers, who apply the colours by careful brush work.

Finally, the fur pile goes to Morris, whose workers in County Durham treat it exactly as they would treat ordinary fur.

Morris's range of full-length coats made from chemicals includes simulated sheared, dyed nutria in any of five shades, at thirty-one guineas each compared with about eight hundred guineas for genuine nutria; and simulated beaver at the same price, compared with £500 or £600 for real beaver. The factory also produces a vast number of jackets, boleros, wraps and stoles.

## Models Treated Them Roughly

When new simulations are made, they are tested before being sent to the shops. "In the early days," says one of Morris's models, "we would wear the coats in and out of the office day after day, treating them roughly, and giving them a year's normal wear in a few weeks."

Corinne Prosser and Doreen Dawne, two London models, were recently the guinea-pigs in a test which began in the cold-storage rooms of an ice-making firm and ended in a public baths. "Normally," says one of Morris's assistants, "the ice company's workers are allowed in the deep-freeze rooms for only twenty minutes at a time. These two girls, each wearing a new simulation fur coat over her normal clothes, stayed in for thirty-two minutes, and looked quite happy when they came out, even though they had been sitting still in twenty degrees of frost."

Next, the girls stood under a heavy shower at the baths for five minutes, then stepped aside and shook the water from their coats. "The artificial fibres don't absorb water," says Morris, "which means that any woman can clean her own coat if necessary. Some of our best simulation ermines have been washed at home. They can come to no harm."

An abrasion test shows that a good nylon fur lasts twice as long as sheepskin before showing signs of wear, and "furs" made from chemicals are moth-proof, because moth grubs cannot digest the inorganic fibres.

"One other point appeals to many customers," says Morris. "It was illustrated by a man who ordered one coat of each kind we had. He was going to exhibit them, together with genuine furs, as part of an anti-trapping campaign run by animal lovers." THE END

# HIS LATE HIGHNESS

*by ROBERT STANDISH*

ILLUSTRATED BY KENNETH WYNN

It had been Maitland's job to keep the prince alive—his own life depended on it. Now the prince was dead. Exceptionally dead . . .

Maitland stood looking down at the body. To save himself now he needed more than a doctor's skill

WHEN I MET Dr. Archibald Maitland for the first time, he was a lonely old man, more than eighty years of age, sitting in the sun and waiting for the end. It was in the winter of 1950-51. His villa above Cannes was, and still is, one of the show places of the French Riviera.

As one of the leading gynaecologists of his day, he had met many famous people. He had travelled widely and observed acutely. In the evening of his life his loneliness was pathetic, but it was sheer interest more than pity which caused me to spend so many hours with him at his villa.

During one of these sun-drenched afternoons, as we sat together on the terrace, he told me the story which I am about to relate, imposing no ban of secrecy upon me. The story may even be true, but of that you must be the judge.

In the summer of 1903, Doctor Archibald Maitland, lately of Edinburgh, completed two years of intensive post-graduate study under a famous Viennese gynaecologist, preparatory to acquiring a practice in London.

Feeling himself entitled to a holiday before returning home, he set out on his bicycle to explore the little principality of Trans-Carpathia, which was off the beaten track and almost unknown to tourists. For centuries Trans-Carpathia had trembled before the acquisitive might of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires, but by a miracle of equilibrium had remained independent of either.

In the shadow of the onion-topped cathedral of Plenz, the capital, Doctor Maitland took a room in the town's chief inn, the Goldener Adler, and proceeded to enjoy the first spell of real leisure he had known since taking his degree.

ON the third day after his arrival, leaving most of his belongings at the inn, he set off into the mountains on foot, carrying a rucksack which contained a few simple necessities, with a trout rod in sections surmounting all.

Following a path made by charcoal burners, Maitland climbed the precipitous northern wall of the valley, emerging at last into unbroken pine forest, which stretched as far as the frontier. Pitching a tiny bivouac tent beside a mountain lake, he assembled his rod and began to fish.

He had landed one medium-sized trout and was trying to land another when the still evening air carried the unmistakable sound of a rifle shot from the direction of the frontier, which, according to Maitland's calculations, lay about three miles distant. The first shot was followed by three more, and then there was silence.

Darkness had fallen and three trout were spluttering in the frying pan when Maitland, his mouth watering with hunger, heard a low cry as, almost simultaneously, the figure of a man

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entered the circle of firelight and fell with outstretched finger tips almost touching the fire itself. Brief examination revealed that a bullet, probably partially spent, had smashed its way through a rib and was embedded just beneath.

Fortunately for the newcomer, who had lost a great deal of blood, Maitland had with him a tiny case containing first-aid requisites. Fifteen minutes sufficed to remove the bullet with a pair of forceps, cleanse the wound, remove splinters of bone, and bandage it as efficiently as circumstances permitted.

On the following morning the wounded man was so far recovered as to be able to eat a piece of black bread and drink some coffee. Shortly before noon two men, by appearance charcoal burners, with rifles slung over their shoulders, came out of the forest and, while Maitland was applying another dressing to the wound, engaged his patient in what he believed was a Slav language.

An hour later they disappeared, returning in the late afternoon with a stretcher improvised from pine poles and sacking. Bearing the wounded man carefully, they disappeared into the forest.

Before they left, one of the men threw a small leather bag at Maitland's feet. He knew by the rich clunk as it fell that it contained gold. Opening it, he counted out three hundred roubles in gold coin, bearing the imperial insignia of the Romanovs.

Now, as Maitland well knew, regarded as a fee for medical service—in the unlikely event that the strangers knew him to be a doctor—the sum was too large. The coins, therefore, must be regarded as a bribe, or hush money. The wounded man, for reasons best known to himself, had crossed a guarded frontier without the formality of papers or passport. That much was evident.

Maitland, as well as being a poor man, was a philosopher; he pocketed the money and decided to keep his mouth shut.

SOME five days later, meditatively sipping a stein of beer in a beer garden beside the river which ran through the centre of Plenz, Maitland observed at a nearby table, looking very ill, the man from whom he had extracted the bullet. The latter, trying to appear unobtrusive, followed the young doctor to the Goldener Adler, mounting the stairs to his room a few paces in the rear.

Maitland saw at once that the man had a high temperature, due to suppuration which had followed neglect of the wound. It was quite evident to him that the stranger dared not visit a doctor in the town for fear of awkward questions.

From a nearby pharmacy, Maitland procured dressings and medicaments, dressed the wound as well as he could, then heaved a sigh of relief when his patient disappeared into the darkness.

Shortly after midnight there came a thunderous knocking on the door of the room. Sleepily, Maitland opened the door to admit two uniformed policemen, who stood watching while he dressed. Then, gathering all his possessions together, and with one of them holding each arm, they took him off to a grim stone building on the outskirts of the town. After searching him carefully, the police led him into a small cell and closed the door.

There was no means of counting the hours which elapsed, for the cell had no window and Maitland's watch had been taken from him. Sometime during the following afternoon, the cell door opened and he was bidden gruffly to follow the two policemen who had arrested him. They led him into a luxuriously furnished office at the top of two flights of stairs.

"Your name, please?" said a tall, saturnine man sitting at a desk, speaking in English.

"Archibald Maitland."

"Your nationality?"

"British."

"These, then, are your own papers?" said the interrogator, pointing to where Maitland's possessions lay on the desk beside a small pile of gold coins.

"Of course."

"You are a doctor?"

"I am. I would like to know by what right and for what reason you throw me into a cell like a common criminal. I demand to see——"

"You are not in a position to demand anything, Doctor Maitland," was the cold reply. "As the accomplice of a self-confessed assassin, you will be a most fortunate man if you do not share the fate which awaits him."

"I know nothing about any assassin," protested Maitland. "I met a wounded man in the forest. Being a doctor, I did for him what I would do for any human being. Last evening I saw the man again. He followed me to my inn. The wound had suppurated and the man was in a raging fever. Again I did what I could for him and he left the inn. We had no language in common, but I tried to make it clear to him that he should be treated in hospital."

"A most humane and charitable act Doctor Maitland. But tell me, please, in your own country is there not an obligation on the part of a doctor who encounters a patient suffering from gunshot wounds to report the matter to the police?"

"I am sorry. I should have reported the incident. I wish now that I had done so."

"Thank you for your frankness. And now, Doctor Maitland, would you care to offer me some explanation of the sum of three hundred roubles in gold found in your possession?"

"Certainly. Two men, evidently friends of the wounded man, trailed him, perhaps because he had lost a lot of blood on the way, to my camp beside the lake. They went away, returning later with a stretcher. As they left, one of them threw me a leather purse containing the gold coins on your desk."

"A large fee, was it not, considering the circumstances?"

"Yes, I suppose it was."

"One might almost say a suspiciously large fee, yes?"

THE doctor paused. "Ye-es, I suppose it does look like that," he said reluctantly, for the first time seriously alarmed. "Nevertheless, I assure you that I am guilty of nothing more than stupidity. It seems that I have blundered into something with a political significance. What it is I do not know, but if you are not prepared to accept my word that I have no guilty knowledge, then I must ask you to put me in touch with the British Legation."

"You will be in touch with nobody, Doctor Maitland, until I am satisfied that your encounter in the forest was as fortuitous as you wish me to believe it was. For your sake, I hope that my suspicions will prove to be without foundation."

On several other occasions during the days which followed, Maitland was taken upstairs for interrogation. The questioning all revolved around his possession of the three hundred roubles in Russian gold. On the last occasion the questioner revealed himself as Colonel Imhof, and it seemed to Maitland that he was being watched to

# Consider your verdict

*by*

*RUSSELL SCOTT,* LL.B.

MRS. LOCK caught a bus to go on a visit to friends at the other side of the town. She went up to the top deck and sat on the left, by the front window.

Nearing Mrs. Lock's destination, the bus passed along a tree-lined road overhung in places with branches. The driver kept to his correct side; the road was of normal width, and there was no traffic coming towards him, although he had to pass a number of road junctions.

A branch hanging level with the top deck struck the front of the bus, smashed a window and showered Mrs. Lock with glass. Her face was badly cut, and she had to go into hospital.

Afterwards, she sued the bus owners for damages, claiming that their driver had been negligent in driving so that branches could strike the bus windows.

The owners denied that he had been negligent. "You cannot expect a bus driver to travel on the wrong side of the road," they said in court. "Roads everywhere have trees lining the way, and it is not unusual for branches to scrape a bus; Mrs. Lock was just unlucky. If she wants to sue anyone, she should bring her action against the council—they are the ones who look after the trees."

Mrs. Lock replied that the driver should have taken care to avoid overhanging branches. "He did not do so," she said. "Therefore he failed to perform his duty to the passengers, and the bus owners are liable."

*What is your verdict? For the judge's decision, turn to page 44*

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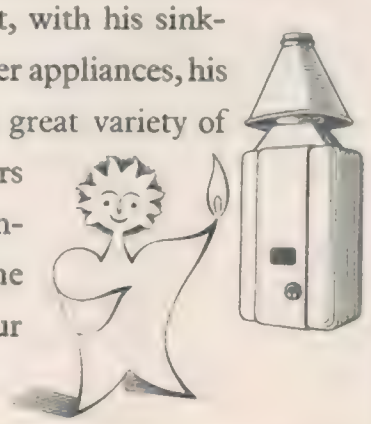

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observe the effect of the name upon him.

"I am inclined, against all the weight of probability, Doctor Maitland," said Imhof, "to believe your version of the story. During the two years you spent in Vienna, as far as I can ascertain, you applied yourself diligently to your studies and did not become involved in any political activities. Nevertheless, you are on your own admission a criminal in the eyes of the Trans-Carpathian law. Whether as a doctor or as a private person, you were obliged by law to report to the police your encounter with the wounded man. Your failure to do so makes you an accessory to his criminal intentions."

"What were his criminal intentions?"

"He admitted this morning that he came here with the intention of assassinating His Serene Highness, Prince Paul of Trans-Carpathia, our beloved sovereign."

"I find it hard to believe that any man would be fool enough to make such an admission," said Maitland dryly.

"Until this morning he proved recalcitrant and uncommunicative," replied Imhof, "but this morning he had so far recovered from his wound that his physicians pronounced him strong enough to endure the application of certain stimuli to his memory. These were duly applied, I may say, and the mood of stubborn silence gave way to one of co-operation and frankness. The Slav is a stoic creature. I am partly Slav myself, but I confess that the forcible removal of one toenail would have been enough to ensure my co-operation. He, poor fellow, did not talk until the third had been removed. It may interest you to know that he corroborates you in every detail."

"Then I assume that you will allow me to leave at once."

"That assumption, Doctor Maitland," said Imhof, smiling mirthlessly, "is hardly warranted by the facts. We have not yet considered the penalty for your offence against the law."

"Well, bring a charge against me and let me defend myself in open court," said Maitland hotly.

"Yes. If that is still your wish after an alternative has been discussed—amicably, I hope—you shall have your trial in open court. But I think it is only fair to warn you that if you insist on this procedure, the charges against you will be pressed to the utmost. Your accomplice still possesses seven toenails, one of them a big toenail. He might—might, mark you—be disposed to involve you more than you are already involved in this unhappy affair. . . . Let us rather seek to resolve matters in a more practical manner as befits men of the world."

"And the alternative?"

"The alternative I offer you is the status of an honoured guest."

"For how long?"

COLONEL IMHOF said: "For about a year, or rather less. You are a doctor. I have a patient for you, an illustrious patient; none other than His Serene Highness Prince Paul of Trans-Carpathia, our beloved ruler."

"Why don't you call in one of the local doctors?"

"Because they, like the majority of their lay fellow-citizens, would welcome his early demise, and the temptation might prove too great to be resisted. You, on the other hand, have no strong feelings in the matter and if your adherence to the literal terms of the Hippocratic Oath does not prove strong enough without other incentive, intelligent self-interest will ensure you diligence in the task of keeping him alive until he has, shall we say, served his purpose."

"What is wrong with him?" asked Maitland.

"Like the majority of the Habsburg family, to which he is related, he is hopelessly inbred. His life has been devoted to alcohol and debauchery, and he is a slave to his baser appetites. I rely on your predecessor for the statement that he has a hobnail liver and that his heart is failing."

"This sort of thing isn't in my line at all," protested Maitland. "I'm a gynaecologist."

"Excellent, my dear fellow. You're just the man for him, because, between ourselves, he is by way of being an old woman." He smiled, and then went on: "As physician-in-ordinary to His Serene Highness, you will find life quite tolerable. Your living quarters will be the last word in luxury. The cook, Gaston Foucard, is a real artist, while I doubt whether the emperor, Franz Joseph himself, has a better wine cellar. For the rest, you will be well paid and, if your patient survives until the spring of next year, you will be free to return home."

"And if he doesn't?"

"Let us not contemplate the consequences of failure, Doctor Maitland. The very thought distresses me."

"Why," asked Maitland, "is it so important that he should survive until the spring?"

"There are good reasons, reasons of state. Accept my assurance that they are adequate."

"Then, since I seem to have no choice in the matter," said Maitland philosophically, "lead me to my patient. If you have described his condition accurately, the sooner I take charge the better."

"I will take you to him at once," said Imhof. "If you do not find what you need in the palace dispensary, anything you require can be procured from Vienna. Nothing is too good for your royal patient."

"Until the spring, I gather," observed Maitland. "And then?"

"Who are we, my dear fellow, to anticipate the vagaries of destiny? Are you ready?"

OF Prince Paul it is enough to say that those who knew him best loved him least. Drunk—and this was his usual condition—he was unpleasant, but in his brief and rare sober moments he was quite impossible.

"Give me the necessary authority to control his excesses," said Maitland after a brief examination, "and I will keep him alive for you; but while he has access to unlimited brandy and rich foods there is nothing I can do."

"That," observed Imhof, "is not so easy. Remember, he is our prince."

"I will try to remember," said Maitland with a gesture of distaste.

The palace at Plenz was in effect a prison, not only for its princely master but for those who served him. Contact with the outside world was rigorously barred.

Major Zhulitch, captain of the palace guard, trembled visibly when Imhof introduced Maitland. Dire penalties hung over his head in the event of an assassin penetrating the palace. Gaston Foucard, the cook, who personally prepared every dish eaten by the prince, was likewise under no illusions as to what would happen if the ruler were poisoned. As an added precaution, every dish was tasted by Zuk, a wretched peasant who ate greedily and had become as bloated as his royal master.

Finding the prince sober one morning, Maitland excited his patient's fears. After a long and careful examination, he painted a horrible picture of what would happen if the prince did not curb his appetites for brandy and rich food.

For a few weeks this was effective. The prince ate moderately and sensibly, gave up brandy altogether and improved visibly in health. But it did not last long. Gaston Foucard, who disapproved of the meagre diet prescribed, smuggled rich dishes in to the

## Consider your verdict

IN the case on page 42, the judge said that it was clear that the driver could have avoided the overhanging branches. "He should have taken care that such obstacles did not strike his vehicle." He had not done so, and therefore he had failed in his duty to Mrs. Lock; she won her case. (*This is the probable verdict, based on actual cases.*)

"—and this will be the children's room"

prince. between meals. Maitland told Imhof of this during one of the latter's weekly visits.

"Won't you understand," said Maitland to Imhof, "that the wrong kind of food and too much of it is just as surely poison as strychnine or prussic acid? I am quite helpless if Foucard is free to poison the prince with rich sauces."

Forthwith, Imhof gave Foucard to understand that the definition of poison had been widened to include rich foods and sauces. The Frenchman, realizing that he had Maitland to thank for this, became his bitter enemy.

The prince's greatest enemy was boredom. He had no inner life. His appetites had always been his life. Now, approaching sixty years of age, he could find no amusement out of doors. He did not read or like music. His taste for wild women had forsaken him. There was no longer any amusement to be found playing off Moscow against Vienna. Nothing had any more flavour, so he reverted to his lifelong intemperance as an escape from the realities which daily became more unpleasant. When Foucard—realizing that the safety of his own skin was now involved—refused to prepare vast platters of rich and greasy food, the prince made life hell for those around him.

Krit, the Croatian valet, smuggled in brandy to his master until he, too, had to be warned by Imhof that if the prince succumbed to delirium tremens, or any other malady attributable to excessive brandy drinking, he would swiftly follow his master to that bourn from which no traveller returns. Krit, recognizing Maitland's hand in this, also became his implacable enemy.

So, in this atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hatred, the long summer came to an end and, after the flurry of dying leaves, winter seized the land in its iron grip. Maitland, looking out of the palace windows at the snow-clad valley and the high mountain walls which enclosed the little principality, lived for the spring which would bring him release.

On a morning in late February, Maitland found the prince in a very low state. Some days previously, and from an unknown source, the latter had obtained several bottles of brandy. Now he was paying the penalty. His breathing was difficult and his heart fluttering madly. The tale told by the stethoscope was alarming. Maitland was of the opinion that his royal patient's survival for more than a few days was unlikely.

Returning to his quarters, he devoted some hours to thinking out his own position and, before he sought his bed that night, he had reached certain decisions. The first of these was that, if it were humanly possible, he would prolong the prince's life to ensure his own future liberty. The second and more difficult decision was that if the prince's life could not be saved, the blame for his death should rest upon other shoulders than his own.

On the following morning, a messenger went to Imhof with a request for certain chemicals not available in the palace dispensary. For the next days Maitland was busy in the dispensary with the door locked, and there grew an awareness among those responsible for the prince's safety that all was not well. Zhulitch, captain of the palace guard, was a frequent visitor. He, Foucard and Krit asked anxious questions of Maitland, who tried to reassure them. Although the lives of all four of them were perhaps at stake, there was no community of thought.

FOUCARD said openly: "All would have been well if this English doctor had not come here. It is my belief that he is in the pay of certain persons who wish the prince ill." He nodded in the direction of the northern and eastern frontier as he spoke.

Krit, the valet, was inclined to blame Foucard, while Zhulitch, who had an overriding responsibility but no direct contact, was badly shaken. He was an unpleasant little man, and Maitland was glad of this. It made things so much easier not to be hampered by sympathies and loyalties.

On a day when the snow was beginning to melt and the spring was still some weeks distant, Maitland visited the prince in the late afternoon, forming the opinion that his patient would not see the morning sun rise. Krit, who was hovering in the royal bedchamber, came to an identical conclusion.

It was Krit's last duty at night to administer a heart stimulant, which gave him the opportunity he desired.

Now Krit hated Foucard. The reasons for his hatred are unimportant, but to Krit they were adequate. Krit, if not an intelligent man, had the forthright logic of a peasant. He decided that the proper person to bear the onus for the prince's death was Foucard.

In a cupboard in the kitchen was a tin of rat poison, whose base was arsenic. Stirring a spoonful of this into a bowl of rich and highly seasoned turtle soup, such as he knew his master loved, and hoping that the seasoning would disguise the flavour of the arsenic, he took it into the bedroom. The prince gulped it down greedily. Krit thereupon went to his own room to await developments.

Shortly after midnight, believing that everyone was asleep, Foucard

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crept from his room and peeped into the royal bedchamber. Instinct told him that all was not well, and he wanted to reassure himself. The night-light burning beside the bed told him in a flash that the prince was dying. He had vomited over the bedclothes, which suggested poison.

Foucard thought quickly. To call the English doctor would be to disclose that he had been in the prince's room, where he had no right to be. Cleaning up the bedclothes so that the vomit should not be apparent, Foucard took a slender stiletto from a case hanging on the wall of the bedroom and plunged it into the prince's heart. He then opened the window, disarranged the snow on the sill and, using one of the prince's boots on the end of a cane, made blurred two-way footprints on the snow of the terrace.

Thus, he argued, the logical inference would be that the prince's death was at the hands of an outsider. Nobody would trouble to analyse the contents of the stomach of a man who had been stabbed through the heart. The intrusion would be attributed to negligence on the part of Zhulitch, whom Foucard loathed.

At 3 a.m., being unable to sleep, Maitland went to visit his patient, finding him as Foucard had left him —except that, before he died, the prince had vomited again.

Five minutes in the dispensary revealed the fact that the stiletto had merely anticipated the deadly effects of the arsenic. It was now Maitland's turn to think hard and fast. For the remainder of that night he was fully occupied.

By the first streak of dawn he had completed that which had to be done. Locking the door of the prince's room and putting the key in his pocket, he awakened Krit and Foucard.

"My friends," he announced, "I have bad news for you. His Serene Highness Prince Paul is dead."

"What caused his death?" asked Foucard smugly.

"He was poisoned," replied Maitland, who, noting the Frenchman's blank astonishment, concluded that it was his hand which had thrust the stiletto into the prince's heart. "Meanwhile," he added, "I have summoned Zhulitch."

"Major Zhulitch," said Maitland when this functionary arrived breathlessly, "I hand you the key of the prince's bedroom. I suggest that Foucard and Krit be present while you make your preliminary investigation. I shall be at your service."

Maitland thereupon strolled out into the palace gardens, where the crocuses were pushing their heads above the melting snow. . . .

THE tale came to its somewhat abrupt end none too soon, for the shadows had lengthened, and a chill wind drove us from the garden. A reminiscent smile was playing about Doctor Maitland's lips as I said good-bye to him on the terrace.

"You must come and see me again soon," he said cordially.

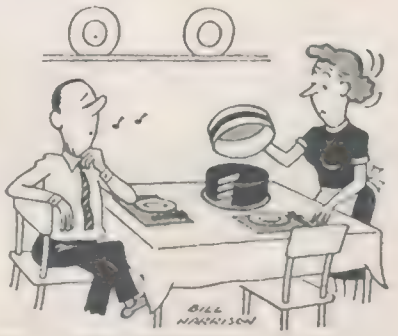
I had not walked more than a hundred yards from the villa when the horrific events which, according to my host, had unrolled at Plenz nearly fifty years ago assumed the mantle of unreality.

That same evening, in order to satisfy my curiosity, I spent an hour in a friend's reference library, where a somewhat different story was unfolded. The only verification I could find of what I had heard from Doctor Maitland was the date. Prince Paul of Trans-Carpathia was in fact killed on March 4, 1904, but according to the reference book he was killed by an anarchist bomb, and a Colonel Imhof was executed for complicity in the plot.

When I next saw Doctor Maitland, I taxed him with having had a little amusement at my expense and told him what I had read.

"That was the version generally believed, my dear fellow, but you may take my word for it that the dagger which Gaston Foucard plunged into the prince's heart wounded him fatally. Foucard was not going to use poison, for to have done so would

"... and now for a surprise"




have been to point the finger of suspicion at himself. While I did not personally see either the poisoning or the stabbing, the reconstruction of what actually happened was perfectly simple. Foucard and Krit were the only two people, except myself, who could have entered the prince's room. Each hated the other and tried to cast suspicion on him."

MY belief in the old man's veracity was now sadly shaken. "I take it," I said, "that you were not held in any way responsible."

"No, my dear fellow, they couldn't accuse me. Imhof was on the scene half an hour later and, I must say, behaved very reasonably. I was over the frontier and on the way to Vienna before noon. With the cheque Imhof gave me I bought my first practice."

"Then who was finally held responsible?" I asked.

"Nobody," replied Maitland. "The mystery was never cleared up."

"Well, what exactly happened when Zhulitch, Foucard and Krit entered the prince's bedroom? I take it that they must have seen the dagger immediately, unless you had removed it."

"No, I hadn't touched it, my dear fellow. Much too dangerous. There might have been a hitch somewhere, and then where would I have been? But to answer your question, I don't know just what did happen when they went in there. They didn't tell me.

"You can understand, can't you," the old man continued dreamily, "that I couldn't afford to have the prince's death attributed to any negligence on my part? Apart from Imhof's threats, I had my future reputation to think of. A doctor who is careless with princes would be downright reckless with common patients, so I had to stop any possibility of gossip. You see that, don't you? Of course, it was hard on poor old Zhulitch, who probably wasn't such a bad fellow, but as a student of biology I knew that self-preservation was the first law of Nature."

"Yes, I realize all that," I interposed somewhat hastily, because he was showing a disposition to wander, "but I want to know what happened when Zhulitch, Foucard and Krit came out of the prince's bedroom. Did each of them try to pin the responsibility on one of the others?"

"No, nothing like that. To tell you the truth, I didn't see them come out of the room. I was about three hundred yards away, hiding behind a stone wall at the time; and a very anxious time it was too. It's chancy stuff at the best of times and I'm not much of a 'chemist, and you can imagine what I felt like with a pound of home-made nitro-glycerine under the bed, waiting for one of them to blunder into the trip wire I'd left to detonate the stuff." THE END

## SKIPPER WILSON SAILS ON A FISHING GAMBLE

*Continued from page 19*

between eight and ten sets. Just before dusk, they make their way to a packer and hand over their salmon to be stored in ice. Only fish caught the same day are accepted. Afterwards, the boat anchors for the night.

If, after turning in their catch on Thursday evenings, the men are near Vancouver, they spend the weekend at home. Otherwise, they put in at one of the small ports on the British Columbian coast. They normally spend Friday on maintenance and repairing the nets. Afterwards, they look for amusement locally—drinking, swimming or seeing a show.

"Often, we're nowhere near a town and have to put in at a cannery," says Wilson. "There's absolutely nothing to do. On Saturday afternoon we catch crabs for amusement. On Sunday we set off for the fishing ground."

### Salmon For Britain

Like all seiners, Wilson fishes mainly for three species of salmon—sockeye, pink and chum. In a good day's fishing, he expects to catch about five hundred sockeye, eight hundred chum or up to two thousand pink.

Although fresh and frozen salmon are sold widely in Canada, nine-tenths of each year's catch is processed and canned at the canneries along the British Columbian coast.

Last year, British Columbia produced more than 1,800,000 cases—each containing forty-eight one-pound tins — against an annual average of only 1,500,000 over twenty years. In 1954, Britain is expected to import a quarter of a million cases.

Gordon Wilson took his first serious fishing trip when he was a sixteen-year-old high-school pupil on summer holiday. "Being born on the coast, I took naturally to fishing," he says. "At the end of the holidays, I decided not to return to school, and got a job as a deck-hand."

Wilson works for a large canning firm, which owns his boat. At the end of the season, the cost of his licence and fuel is deducted from the value of the catch. Of the remainder, a portion goes to the packing company and the rest is divided among the crew, with Wilson, as captain, getting fifty per cent more than each of the others.

Highly successful fishermen own their own boats, occasionally more than one. Since a middle-sized seiner costs about £30,000, an owner is regarded as being moderately wealthy.

When the season is over, fishermen take part-time jobs or work in herring and halibut boats. For the last fifteen years, Wilson has been in charge of a cannery fleet warehouse where the equipment of 110 seiners is overhauled.

### Landslide In Gorge

Conservancy, says Wilson, is responsible for the present prosperity of the industry. Not only are there close seasons and, sometimes, a limit on the size of catches, but fish are actively helped to reach their spawning grounds.

A prewar decline in Fraser sockeye is now generally attributed to a landslide during railway construction work in 1913 at a gorge called Hell's Gate. By narrowing the river, the immense volume of fallen rock so speeded up the flow that in some years many fish were unable to go upstream to reach their spawning grounds.

Now, fishways have been built at both sides of the river. They slow up the flow of water and provide sheltered passages through which the fish can swim. Increased catches of Fraser sockeye have already proved their worth.

Although Wilson's three sons have all made trips in his boat, none of them has become a fisherman by profession. One is a manufacturer's agent; one is in insurance; and one, who holds a doctorate of London University, is an anthropologist in Kenya.

Wilson himself has mixed feelings. "It's a good life," he says, "and the money's not too bad. But you're away from home too much." THE END

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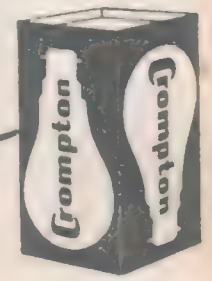

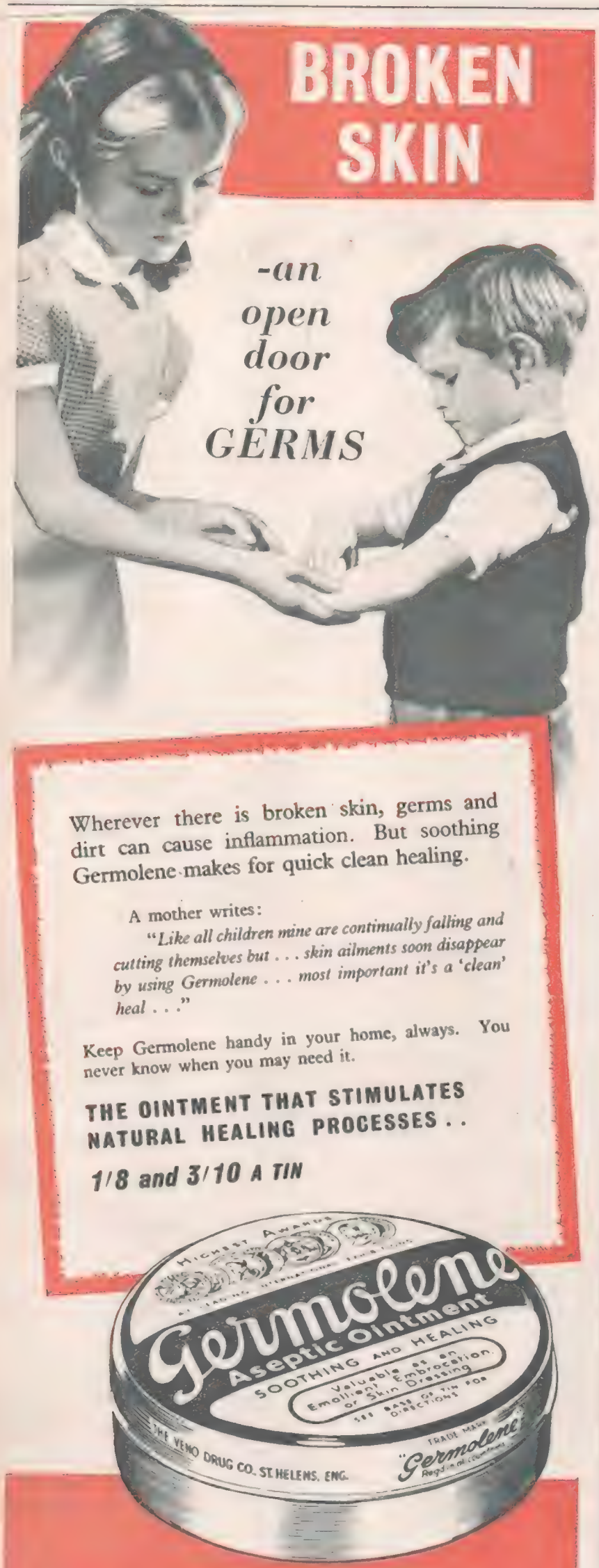


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## MAGNET IN THE SKY

*Continued from page 17*

began to tremble. She had no idea, no idea at all, of the way back.

"Mack!"

But Mack was still in his drugged sleep and, anyway, the waterfall would drown what was left of her call after it had struggled through those dense curtains of green. Sternly, she calmed herself and tried to figure out directions. As soon as her mind was made up, she tore her way through thorns and tangled lianas, grimly holding to a firm direction. But more and more new jungle rose up to bar her way.

Then the tiger roared again.

It shocked her, because it came from directly behind her and because it sounded so terribly distant. She had been headed for certain disaster. She would never have found her way back to Mack and he'd have wakened alone and believed she'd left him to die alone. The tiger had saved her.

Whirling round, she tore herself free from a rattan that clutched at her hair like an octopus and began her determined struggle back to the cave.

She was dead beat when she reached Mack's side and found him awake.

"I thought you'd gone," he said. "Why didn't you go, Rose?"

It tore her heart to see him so weak, so humiliated. Like the tiger in his cage. "I'm going to light a fire," she said. "A smoke column shows up for twenty miles." She was spreading her store of wood in the hot sun.

He said: "Don't throw away your chance of escape for me. Unless there are some Europeans within twenty miles, and unless they happened to hear the plane above the roar of that storm, signals won't help. They'd just think the Sakais, the jungle hunters, were roasting a kill." To himself he added: "The bandits wouldn't light a fire in the daytime, of course. . . ."

Bandits. She'd forgotten the Communist terrorists who hid out in the Malayan jungle. She controlled her sick shiver of dread and said: "When the fire's going, I'll make some tea with your emergency ration."

"I'd like some water now," he said.

While they were both drinking, she suddenly lowered her cup. The tiger. He must be mad with thirst in the heat of the plane wreck. And hearing the waterfall, too. . . .

She took up the broken section of engine cowling she'd used as a bowl when she washed the blood from Mack's face. Filling it at the waterfall, she wondered whether she'd have the nerve to hold it to the hole in the torn fuselage.

When she reached the plane, the moonlit vision returned to her of the great claws tearing at the gashed metal and for a moment she could not force herself nearer. Inside the hole was a dull glitter. The tiger's eye.

It was a time for courage, and Rose was discovering that she had a little more than she'd imagined. Pity for the doomed beast unlocked her frozen limbs as she bent forward and held the water with two hands to the hole.

Delicately, like a kitten, the tiger drank, his great tongue lapping steadily until the improvised bowl was dry, his long whiskers glinting in the sunlight.

"That's for saving me this morning," she said, "when I was lost."

On her return to the cave, Mack asked her what she'd been doing.

"My job," she told him. "What an air hostess is for. Looking after the passenger." And she looked down at Mack, pale and broken in his blood-stained shirt, trapped like the tiger.

For five hours her signal fire sent up a column of smoke before the gathering monsoon clouds swallowed it. She carried water to the tiger again, but in his parched eagerness he tipped most of it out and a desperate yellow eye stared through the hole at her.

She was frowning at the big cargo door on the undamaged side of the fuselage. If she had the nerve to swing it open, the tiger would be free, home again. If she had the nerve. . . .

But that was right out. She never would have the nerve; and, even if she had, wouldn't the great famished cat seize the nearest prey as soon as he was free? And she thought of Mack, helpless in the cave with the smell of blood on him.

Only one tiger in hundreds was a man-eater, she knew that. There had to be abnormal conditions—extreme old age, loss of teeth, lameness—before a tiger would turn to such easy prey. But she glanced back at the wreck. Abnormal conditions. . . .

She sighed and went back to Mack.

He didn't hear her coming. He'd moved. He was on his side, his face wry with pain, writing something on a leaf from his logbook. At his elbow was the cup of tea she'd made him and lying beyond the cup was the sleeping-tablet phial. Empty.

For a second she lost control, screaming *"Mack!"* and sobbing as she snatched the cup and put it beyond his reach.

He fell back and turned a hopeless, beaten face up to her. "Please, Rose," he pleaded. "It's the only way. You'll never take your chance as long as I'm . . . lying here like this. It was just a way of saying goodbye, Rose, making it easier for you."

"Easier?" She blinked back tears. "Living without you, Mack? You think that's easy? I've had months of it. . . ."

"There was no need," he said gently, and she couldn't answer him. Yesterday's answer didn't seem so good any more.

She had turned to throw the poisoned tea over the cliff edge, but suddenly she paused, staring down at the cup. Then slowly she went to the little fall and half filled the tiger's bowl with the cool water. Finally she added half of the drugged tea.

To the tiger she said: "There, that's the best I can do for you. If it only makes you sleep maybe I'll have nerve enough to open the door. And if you never wake up you can thank me for that, too."

The tiger drank.

When she returned to him, Mack spoke without opening his eyes. "If I'd listened to you, quit flying and taken a ground job and married you . . . what would we have been doing this afternoon, d'you think?"

She knelt at his side. "Mack, you're all smashed up already. Don't lie there and break your heart. We've always been apart; now we're together. Think of that."

His eyes opened. "You're wonderful, Rose," he sighed. "Twice the man I am."

That hurt her, too. She said: "It's easier for me. In the London blitz, when I was twelve, a bomb hit our house and I was buried for seven hours. Alone. That was what made it so ghastly. Being alone. You mustn't worry about me as long as I'm with you. It's the only place I want to be."

An hour, two hours, ticked by on his old Royal Canadian Air Force watch. She lay beside him in the damp chill of the dark cloud, talking about the few times they'd had together; and when, after a time, Mack started telling her of some of his exploits with Davy and the old plane he loved in those fabulous lands between the Bay of Bengal and the China Sea, she listened without the old impatience and with a new sympathy.

At last she rose and walked through the rain to the wreck. There was silence and stillness inside, though when she put her ear to the plane's metal wall, still hot from its baking in the noon sun, she could hear slow, regular breathing. Straightening up, she tilted her chin and mobilized her nerve.

She had made up the fire in the mouth of the cave. Wild beasts feared fire. The tiger wouldn't attack the helpless man beyond the fire, even if he smelled his blood. With sudden resolution she seized the door handle, turned and pulled.

He wasn't asleep. He was on his feet and as she threw back the door with a clatter they stood for a vivid moment face to face. It was as if the temperature dropped forty degrees

"Don't ever scare Daddy like that again!"

in a second. As he slowly crouched, she stopped breathing, stood rigid with fear.

What she saw then was beyond description beautiful. The tiger flowed past her through the rain in a liquid leap for freedom. He landed, a rainbow of gold, gleaming white and glossy black, on the ledge's brink. The pause there was a mere millisecond and he was in the air again, flying out of sight beyond the ruined scrub in the wake of the plane's crash.

Rose only half understood the tears that filled her eyes as she started breathing again. She had given the tiger freedom. Freedom and life, which for vital creatures were the same thing. And hadn't the tiger given her something in return? Surely. She had learned from him that freedom was something to be preserved, not stolen, that living creatures belonged in certain places—the tiger in the jungle, Mack in the sky.

She knew now that she wanted tigers to stay free in their jungles . . . and she wanted Mack the way he was, not caged on the ground as her prisoner. The only trouble was, she'd found it out too late.

She went back to Mack and said: "Don't look like that." She lit a cigarette, kissed his lips and placed it between them. "We still have a chance. I can hunt for food——"

He cut in wearily: "A jungle hunter can live on what he finds in the jungle so long as he spends all his time food-hunting, so long as he knows which leaves and roots and fruits are fit to eat, so long as he knows how to trap birds and small game. Your only chance is to leave me and follow the water."

He was growing more and more desperate while she, amazingly, grew steadily calmer. He cried out suddenly: "I can face anything—for myself. This is only something that's been a daily possibility for years. As long as I know you're taking your chance of safety, I can face anything."

She held his tense right hand between hers. "We feel opposite ways," she said. "I'd die if I had to face that jungle alone; but so long as you're with me, Mack, I can take anything. Anything."

He went on arguing. She loved him for the fight he was putting up to persuade her to desert him and take her chance of survival. He was a fighter, all right. He'd chosen a tough, risky way of life when he could have had it easy. And now, though his pain was convulsing the hand between hers like a helpless body under torture, he hadn't thought of himself for hours.

Rain whispered on the million leaves of the jungle. Soon it would be dusk She said: "This way it's not so bad. I've always had a nightmare of this happening to you, and me waiting somewhere, alone, for news. This way we're together."

It was then that she caught her breath sharply. "I heard a voice," she cried.

Mack said: "It's one of the things that happens if you're lost in the jungle. You hear your name called through the trees." Then his hand tightened. "Davy!" he gasped.

But it wasn't Davy's voice that came up to them from the ledge below. "Hallo up there! Hallo!"

And as it came to her that it was all over, that rescue was near, that the future had suddenly been given back to Mack and her, Rose began to tremble uncontrollably.

"Please come up here," she called, and then she sank down at Mack's side, threw her arms around him and sobbed like a small child.

WHEN the tall, grey-headed tin mine manager reached the ledge with his detachment of armed Malay guards, he stared in amazement at Rose's uniform.

"A hostess!" he exclaimed. "Any passengers?"

"Only one," Rose said. "He's all right. Come and meet the pilot."

They spent the last hour of daylight taking down the bunks Mack and Davy had rigged up in the fuselage (they slept on them when they couldn't afford hotel bills) and fitting them as stretchers for Mack and Davy, who'd been found badly concussed on the ledge below.

After dark, their rescuer heard the story, and what they didn't tell the manager's quick eyes soon detected. As Rose discovered when Mack's stretcher was carried next morning down the path two guards were cutting through the jungle with *parangs*.

"A good guy," the miner remarked, "but I don't suppose he'll find his way up there any more." And he tipped a glance up at a patch of blue sky glimpsed through the high treetops.

"Don't you believe it!" Rose said. "The sky's his home. The ground is just where he sleeps and takes time off."

He held her arm to steady her across a fallen tree. "Think a lot of him, don't you?" he said.

She told him: "We're going to be married next month."

"If the doctors can patch him up in time," he smiled.

Rose smiled, too.

"No ifs any more," she said. "Unconditionally." THE END

When a girl becomes aware...
It was the night I saw John with Denise in his arms. I'd never thought of him like that... It was at that moment I became aware of myself as a woman...
THAT EVENING – AT HOME
WHAT'S THE MATTER, DARLING?
NOTHING, MOTHER. LEAVE ME ALONE!
JILL, I THINK I KNOW THE CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE. I'VE TRIED TO HINT BEFORE... YOU SEE, DARLING, IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR APPEARANCE. PERSONAL FRESHNESS IS JUST AS IMPORTANT. WHY DON'T YOU TRY WHAT THE REST OF US ALWAYS USE?
WHAT A MARVELLOUS SENSATION! I'VE NEVER FELT SO REFRESHED IN MY LIFE. WISH I'D BEEN SENSIBLE & USED LIFEBUOY TOILET SOAP BEFORE. AND I HAD THE CHANCE, TOO..!
TWO WEEKS LATER
THANKS FOR TAKING ME TO THE PICTURES, JOHN. I DID ENJOY IT.
WHAT ABOUT COMING TO THE TENNIS-CLUB DANCE WITH ME NEXT WEEK, JILL?
MOTHER WAS RIGHT WHEN SHE SAID PERFUMES AND DEODORANTS AREN'T ENOUGH. I MUST BE AT MY BEST AT THE DANCE. I'LL MAKE SURE BY USING LIFEBUOY TOILET SOAP

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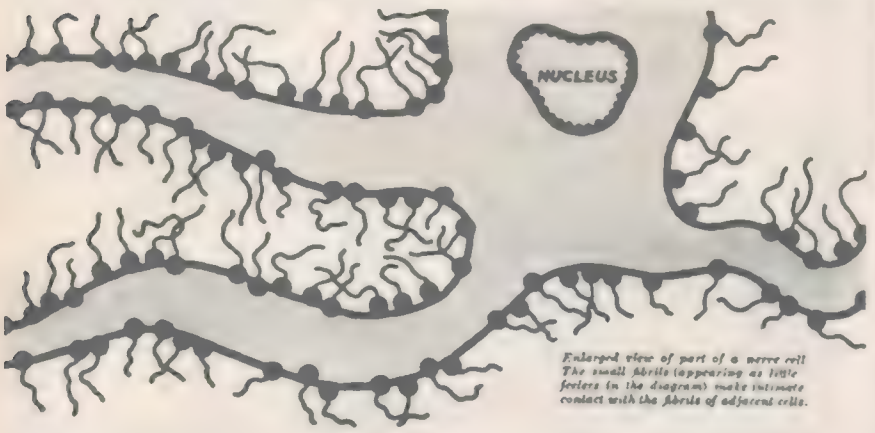
# *Sleeplessness and your nerves*




*Enlarged view of part of a nerve cell. The small fibrils (appearing as little feelers in the diagram) make intimate contact with the fibrils of adjacent cells.*

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"Whittaker had a hole in one!"

## DESTINATION UNKNOWN

*Continued from page 23*

she was pleased. She went on in a practical tone: "There's just one other thing that occurred to me. You say nobody's likely to know what Olive Betterton looks like, but what about being recognized as *myself*? I don't know anyone in Casablanca, but there are the people who travelled here with me in the plane. Or I may run across a friend on holiday."

"You needn't worry about the passengers in the plane. The people who flew with you from Paris were business men who went on to Dakar. You will go to a different hotel, the hotel for which Mrs. Betterton had reservations. You will be wearing her clothes and her style of hairdressing, and one or two strips of plaster at the sides of your face will make you look very different in feature. We've got a doctor coming to work upon you, by the way. Local anaesthetic, so it won't hurt, but you will have to have a few genuine marks of the accident."

"You're very thorough," said Hilary, slowly.

"Have to be."

HILARY went on: "You've never asked whether Olive Betterton told me anything before she died."

"I understood you had scruples."

"I'm sorry."

"Not at all. I respect you for them. I'd like to indulge in them myself—but they're not in the schedule."

"She did say something that perhaps I ought to tell you. She said: 'Tell him'—Betterton, that is—'tell him to be careful—Boris—dangerous ——.'"

"Boris." Jessop repeated the name with interest. "Ah! Our correct foreign major, Boris Glydr. He's a Pole who came to see me in London. He's supposed to be a cousin by marriage of Tom Betterton's first wife. But we've only his word for it."

"She was frightened," said Hilary frowning. "Can you describe him to me? I'd like to be able to recognize him."

"Yes. It might be as well. Six foot. Weight roughly eleven stone. Fair—rather wooden poker face—light eyes—foreign stilted manner—English very correct, but a pronounced accent —stiff military bearing."

He added: "I had him tailed when he left my office. Nothing doing. He went straight to the U.S. Embassy—quite correctly; he'd brought me an introductory letter from there. The usual kind they send out when they want to be polite and non-committal. I presume he left the Embassy either in somebody's car or by the back entrance disguised as a footman or something. Anyway, he evaded us. Yes—I should say that Olive Betterton was perhaps right when she said that Boris Glydr was dangerous."

• • •

In the small formal salon of the Hotel St. Louis, two ladies were sitting, each engaged in her particular occupation. Mrs. Calvin Baker, short, plump, with well-blued hair, was writing letters with the same driving energy she applied to all forms of activity. No one could have mistaken Mrs. Calvin Baker for anything but a travelling American, comfortably off, with an inexhaustible thirst for precise information on every subject under the sun.

In an uncomfortable Empire type chair, Miss Hetherington, who could not have been mistaken for anything but travelling English, was knitting one of those melancholy, shapeless-looking garments that English ladies of middle age always seem to be knitting. Miss Hetherington was tall and thin with a scraggy neck, badly arranged hair, and a general expression of moral disapproval of the universe.

Miss Hetherington and Mrs. Calvin Baker, having both spent a couple of nights under the roof of the St. Louis, had become acquainted. Mrs. Calvin Baker, with American friendliness, talked to everybody. Miss Hetherington, though just as eager for companionship, talked only to English and Americans of what she considered a certain social standing.

She began to count stitches *sotto voce*. "Twenty-eight, twenty-nine—now what can I have—oh, I see."

A tall woman with red hair looked into the room and hesitated a moment before going on down the passage towards the dining-room. Mrs. Calvin Baker and Miss Hetherington were immediately alert.

Mrs. Baker slewed herself round from the writing table and spoke in a thrilled whisper.

"They say she's the only survivor of that terrible plane crash last week."

"I saw her arrive this afternoon," said Miss Hetherington, dropping another stitch in her excitement. "*In an ambulance.*"

"Straight from the hospital, so the manager said. I wonder now if it was wise—to leave hospital so soon. She's had concussion, I believe."

"She's got strapping on her face, too—cut, perhaps, by the glass. What a mercy she wasn't burned! Terrible injuries from burning in these air accidents, I believe."

"It just doesn't bear thinking about. Poor young thing. The newspaper gave her name. A Mrs. Beverly —no, Betterton, that was it."

"Betterton," said Miss Hetherington reflectively. "Now what does that remind me of? Betterton. In the papers. Now what was it . . . ?"

MRS. THOMAS BETTERTON had left hospital that afternoon five days after the accident. An ambulance had driven her to the Hotel St. Louis. Looking pale and ill, her face strapped and bandaged, she was shown at once to the room reserved for her, a sympathetic manager in attendance.

"What emotions you must have experienced, madame!" he said. "But what an escape! What a miracle! What good fortune! Only three survivors, I understand, and one of them

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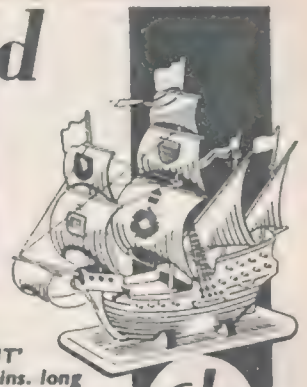

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still in hospital—and in a critical condition."

Hilary sank down on a chair wearily.

"Yes, indeed," she murmured. "I can hardly believe it myself. Even now I can remember so little. The last twenty-four hours before the crash are still quite vague to me."

The manager murmured sympathetically and departed. Hilary got up and looked at herself in the glass. So imbued was she now with her new personality that she positively felt the weakness in her limbs which would be natural to one who had just come out of hospital after a severe ordeal.

She had already inquired at the desk, but there had been no messages or letters for her there. The first steps in her new rôle had to be taken very much in the dark. Olive Betterton might perhaps have been told to ring a certain number or to contact a certain person at Casablanca. As to that there was no clue. All the knowledge she had to go on was Olive Betterton's passport, her Letter of Credit, and her book of Cooks tickets and reservations. These provided for two days in Casablanca, six days in Fez and five days in Marrakesh. These reservations were now, of course, out of date, and would have to be dealt with accordingly.

The passport, the Letter of Credit and the accompanying Letter of Identification had been suitably dealt with. The photograph on the passport was now Hilary's, the signature on the Letter of Identification was "*Olive Betterton*" in Hilary's handwriting. Her credentials were all in order. Her task was to play her part adequately and to wait. Her master card must be the plane accident, and its resultant loss of memory and general haziness.

The natural thing to do would be to rest. Accordingly, she lay down on the bed. For two hours she went over in her mind all that she had been taught. Olive's luggage had been destroyed in the plane. Hilary had a few things with her that had been supplied at the hospital. She passed a comb through her hair, touched her lips with a lipstick and went down to the hotel dining-room where she was looked at, she noticed, with a certain amount of interest.

AFTER dinner, she sat for a short while in the small, formal salon. She wondered if anyone would approach her in any way. There were one or two other women scattered about the room, and presently a small, plump, middle-aged woman with well-blued white hair moved to a chair near hers. She opened proceedings in a brisk, pleasant American voice.

"I do hope you'll excuse me, but I just felt I had to say a word. It's you, isn't it, who had the *wonderful* escape from that air crash the other day?"

Hilary put down the magazine she was reading. "Yes," she said.

"My! Isn't that terrible. The crash, I mean. Only three survivors, they say. Is that right?"

"Only two," said Hilary. "One of the three died in hospital."

"My! You don't say! Now, if you don't mind my asking, Miss—Mrs. . . ."

"Betterton."

"Well, if you don't mind my asking, just where were you sitting in that plane?"

Hilary knew the answer and gave it promptly. "Near the tail."

"They always say, don't they, that's the safest place. I just insist now on always having a place near the rear doors. Did you hear that, Miss Hetherington?" She turned her head to include another middle-aged lady. This one was uncompromisingly British with a long, sad, horselike face. "It's just as I was saying the other day. Whenever you go into an aeroplane, don't you let those air hostesses take you right up to the front."

"I suppose someone has to sit at the front," said Hilary.

"Well, it won't be me," said her new American friend promptly. "My name's Baker, by the way, Mrs. Calvin Baker."

Hilary acknowledged the introduction and Mrs. Calvin Baker plunged on — monopolizing the conversation easily.

"Where do you plan to go from here, Mrs. Betterton?" she asked after a while.

"I would like to see Fez," said Hilary, cautiously. "I shall have to get fresh reservations, of course."

"Oh, yes, you certainly oughtn't to miss Fez or Rabat."

"You've been there?"

"Not yet. I'm planning to go there shortly, and so is Miss Hetherington."

"I believe the old city is quite unspoiled," said Miss Hetherington.

The conversation continued in desultory fashion for some time further. Then Hilary pleaded fatigue from her first time out of hospital and went up to her bedroom.

The evening so far had been quite indecisive. The two women who had talked to her had been such well-known travelling types that she could hardly believe that they were other than they seemed. Tomorrow, she decided, if she had received no word or communication of any kind, she would go to Cooks and raise the question of fresh reservations at Fez and Marrakesh.

THERE were no letters, messages or telephone calls the following morning and about eleven o'clock she made her way to the travel agency. There was something of a queue, but when she at last reached the counter and began talking to the clerk, an interruption occurred. A somewhat more senior clerk with glasses elbowed the young man aside. He beamed at Hilary through his glasses.

"It is Madame Betterton, is it not? I have all your reservations made."

"I am afraid," said Hilary, "that they will be out of date. I have been in hospital and. . . ."

"Ah, *mais oui*, I know all that. Let me congratulate you on your escape, madame. But I got your telephone message about fresh reservations, and we have them here ready for you."

Hilary felt a faint quickening of her pulse. As far as she knew, no one had phoned the travel agency. Here then were definite signs that Olive Betterton's travelling arrangements were being supervised.

She said, "I wasn't sure if they had telephoned or not."

"But yes, madame. Here, I will show you."

He produced railway tickets, and vouchers for hotel accommodation, and a few minutes later the transactions were completed. Hilary was to leave for Fez by train on the following day.

It was on the day of Hilary's departure that Mrs. Calvin Baker, coming into the hotel in her usual brisk fashion, was accosted by Miss Hetherington, whose long thin nose was quivering with excitement.

"I've remembered about the name Betterton—the disappearing scientist. It was in all the papers. About two months ago."

"Why, now I do remember something. A British scientist—yes—he'd been at some conference in Paris."

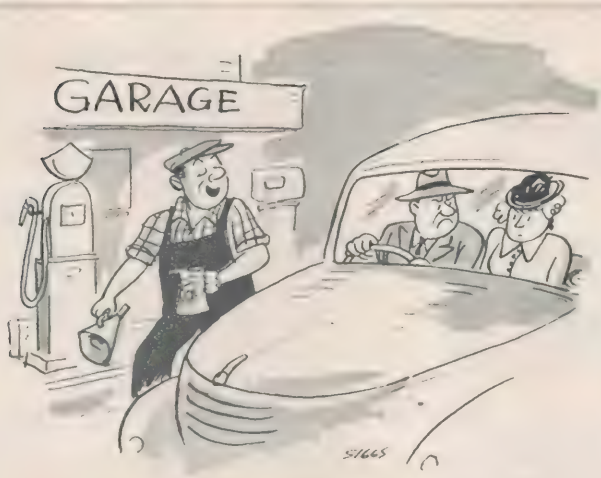
"Yes—that's it. Now I wonder, do you think—this could possibly be his *wife*. I looked in the register and I see her address is Harwell—Harwell, you know, is the atom station. I do think all these atom bombs are very wrong. And cobalt—such a lovely colour in one's paint-box and I used it a lot as a child—the worst of all; I understand *nobody* can survive. We weren't meant to do these experiments. Somebody told me the other day that her cousin, who is a very shrewd man, said the whole world might go *radioactive*."

"My, my," murmured Mrs. Calvin Baker.

• • •

Casablanca had vaguely disappointed Hilary by being such a prosperous-looking French town with no hint of the Orient or mystery about it, except for the crowds in the streets.

The weather was still perfect, sunny and clear, and she enjoyed looking out of the train at the passing landscape as they journeyed northwards. A small Frenchman who looked like a commercial traveller sat opposite to her, and in the far corner was a somewhat




"How did you like the way I beat out that dented wing for you last week, Mr. Green?"

disapproving-looking nun telling her beads.

Two Moorish ladies with a great many packages who conversed gaily with one another completed the complement of the carriage.

Offering a light for her cigarette, the little Frenchman opposite soon entered into conversation. He pointed out things of interest as they passed, and gave her various information about the country. She found him interesting and intelligent.

"You should go to Rabat, madame. It is a great mistake not to go to Rabat."

"I shall try to do so. But I have not very much time. Besides," she smiled, "money is short. We can only take so much with us abroad, you know."

"But that is simple. One arranges with a friend here."

"I'm afraid I haven't got a convenient friend in Morocco."

"Next time you travel, madame, send me a little word. I will give you my card. And I arrange everything. I travel often in England on business and you repay me there. It is all quite simple."

"That's very kind of you, and I hope I shall pay a second visit to Morocco."

"It must be a change for you, madame, to come here from England. So cold, so foggy, so disagreeable."

"Yes, it's a great change."

"I, too, travelled from Paris three weeks ago. It was then fog, rain and all of the most disgusting. I arrive here and all is sunshine. Though, mind you, the air is cold. But it is pure. Good pure air. How was the weather in England when you left?"

"Much as you say," said Hilary. "Fog."

"Ah yes, it is the foggy season. Snow—you have had snow this year?"

"No," said Hilary, "there has been no snow." She wondered to herself, amusedly, if this much-travelled little Frenchman was following what he considered to be the correct trend of English conversation, dealing principally with the weather. She asked him a question or two about the political situation in Morocco and in Algeria, and he responded willingly, showing himself to be well informed.

Glancing across at the far corner, Hilary observed the nun's eyes fixed disapprovingly on her. The Moroccan ladies got out and other travellers got in. It was evening when they arrived at Fez.

"Permit me to assist you, madame."

Hilary was standing, rather bewildered at the bustle and noise of the station. Arab porters were seizing her luggage from her hands, shouting, yelling, calling, recommending different hotels. She turned gratefully to her courteous new French acquaintance.

"You are going to the Palais Jamaï, *n'est-ce pas*, madame?"

"Yes."

"That is right. It is eight kilometres from here, you understand."

"Eight kilometres?" Hilary was dismayed. "It's not in the town, then."

"It is by the old town," the Frenchman explained. "Me, I stay here at the hotel in the commercial new city. But for the holiday, the rest, the enjoyment, naturally you go to the Palais Jamaï. It was a former residence, you understand, of the Moroccan nobility. It has beautiful gardens, and you go straight from it into the old city of Fez, which is untouched. If you permit, I will arrange for a taxi for you."

"You're very kind, but. . . ."

The Frenchman spoke in rapid Arabic to the porters, and shortly afterwards Hilary took her place in a taxi, her baggage was pushed in, and the Frenchman told her exactly what to give the rapacious porters. He also dismissed them with a few sharp words of Arabic when they protested that the remuneration was inadequate. He whipped a card from his pocket and handed it to her.

"My card, madame, and if I can be of assistance to you at any time, tell me. I shall be at the Grand Hotel here for the next four days."

He raised his hat and went away. Hilary looked down at the card which she could just see before they moved out of the lighted station:

*Monsieur Henri Laurier*

BRISKLY, the taxi drove out of the town, through the country, up a hill. Hilary tried to see, looking out of the windows, where she was going, but darkness had set in now. Except when they passed a lighted building, nothing much could be seen. Was this, perhaps, where her journey diverged from the normal and entered the unknown? Was Monsieur Laurier an emissary from the organization that had persuaded Thomas Be[illegible]n to leave his work, his home and his wife? She sat in the corner of the taxi, nervously apprehensive, wondering where it was taking her.

It took her, however, in the most exemplary manner, to the Palais Jamaï. She dismounted there, passed through an arched gateway and found herself, with a thrill of pleasure, in an Oriental interior. There were long divans, coffee tables, and native rugs. From the reception desk she was taken through several rooms which led out of each other, out on to a terrace, passing by orange trees and scented flowers, and then up a winding staircase and into a pleasant bedroom, still Oriental in style but equipped with all the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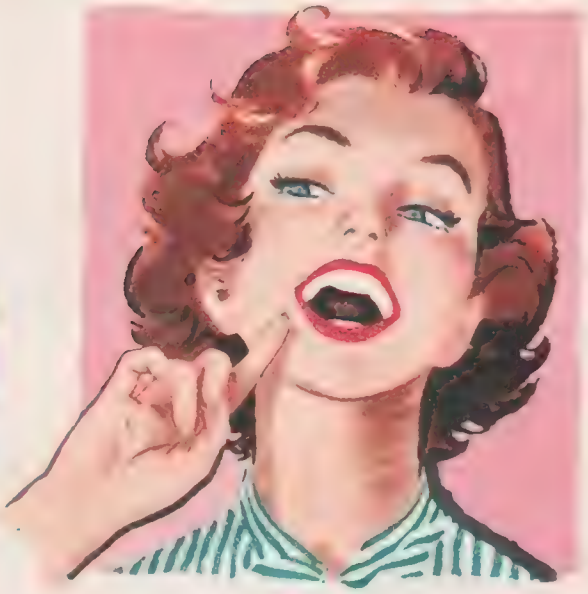

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## WHO'S WHO?

**They look alike, but their lives have been very different. From the jumbled details on the right, can you provide each woman with her potted biography—and her name? The answers will be found on page 57.**

**BORN:**
A Twenty-two years ago, the daughter of a tribal chieftain and a German mother.
B Twenty-eight years ago in Smithfield, North Carolina, U.S.A., daughter of a cotton and tobacco grower.

**FIRST JOB:**
C Working on her father's farm.
D Marrying an emperor.

**HAS SAID:**
E "People who bury themselves in their work might as well be buried."
F "A woman's first duty is to her husband."

**FAMOUS AS:**
G A harried beauty.
H Another Venus.

*conforts modernes* so necessary to twentieth-century travellers.

Dinner, the porter informed her, took place from seven thirty. She unpacked a little, washed, combed her hair and went downstairs through the long Oriental smoking-room, out on the terrace and across and up some steps to a lighted dining-room running at right angles to it.

The dinner was excellent, and as Hilary ate, various people came and went from the restaurant. She was too tired to size them up and classify them this particular evening, but one outstanding personality did take her eye. An elderly man, very yellow of face, with a little goatee beard. She noticed him because of the extreme deference paid to him by the staff. Plates were whisked away and placed for him at the mere raising of his head. The slightest turn of an eyebrow brought a waiter rushing to his table. She wondered who he was.

The majority of diners were clearly tourists. There was a German at a big table in the centre, and a middle-aged man with a fair, very beautiful girl whom she thought might be Swedes, or possibly Danes. There was an English family with two children, and various groups of Americans. There were three French families.

After dinner she had coffee on the terrace. It was slightly cold but not unduly so, and she enjoyed the smell of scented blossoms. She went to bed early.

SITTING on the terrace the following morning in the sunshine under the striped umbrella that protected her from the sun, Hilary felt how fantastic the whole thing was. Here she sat, pretending to be a dead woman, expecting something melodramatic and out of the ordinary to occur. After all, wasn't it only too likely that poor Olive Betterton had come abroad merely to distract her mind and heart from sad thoughts and feelings? Probably the poor woman had been just as much in the dark as everybody else.

The old man with the yellow face and the little goatee came up the terrace from the gardens below. He went and sat at a table against the extreme wall, and immediately a waiter darted forth. He gave an order and the waiter bowed before him and went away, in all haste to execute it.

Hilary ordered a Martini, and when it came she asked the waiter in a low voice, "Who is the old man there against the wall?"

"Ah!" The waiter leaned forward dramatically. "That is Monsieur Aristides. He is enormously—but yes, enormously—rich."

He sighed in ecstasy at the contemplation of so much wealth and Hilary looked over at the shrivelled-up, bent figure at the far table. Such a wrinkled, dried-up, mummified old morsel of humanity. And yet, because of his enormous wealth, waiters darted and sprang and spoke with awe in their voices.

Old Monsieur Aristides shifted his position. Just for a moment his eyes met hers. He looked at her for a moment, then looked away.

Not so insignificant after all, Hilary thought to herself. Those eyes, even at that distance, had been wonderfully intelligent and alive.

Most people had gone in to lunch, but Hilary had had breakfast late and was in no hurry for her midday meal. She ordered herself another drink. A good-looking young Frenchman came out of the bar and across the terrace, cast a swift discreet glance at Hilary which, thinly disguised, meant: "Is there anything doing here, I wonder?" and then went down the steps to the terrace below. As he did so he half sang, half hummed a snatch of opera,

*"Le long des lauriers roses,*
*Rêvant de doucces choses."*

The words formed a little pattern on Hilary's brain. *Le long des lauriers roses.* Laurier. *Laurier?* That was the name of the Frenchman in the train. Was there a connection here or was it coincidence? She opened her bag and hunted in it for the card he had given her.

*Monsieur Henri Laurier,*
*3 rue des Croissants,*
*Casablanca.*

A shadow fell on her and she looked up, startled. Monsieur Aristides was standing there between her and the sun. His eyes were not on her. He was looking across over the gardens below towards the silhouette of hills in the distance. She heard him sigh and then he turned abruptly towards the dining-room and, as he did so, the sleeve of his coat caught the glass on her table and sent it flying to the terrace, where it broke. He wheeled round quickly and politely.

*"Ah! Mille pardons, madame."*

Hilary assured him smilingly in French that it did not matter in the least. With the swift flick of a finger he summoned a waiter. The waiter as usual came running. He ordered a replacement of madame's drink and then, once more apologizing, he made his way into the restaurant.

The young Frenchman, still humming, came up the steps again. He lingered noticeably as he passed Hilary, but as she gave no sign he went on in to lunch with a slight philosophic shrug of his shoulders.

A FRENCH family passed across the terrace, the parents calling to their young. They passed up the steps and into the restaurant, a happy contented little nucleus of family life. Hilary felt suddenly alone and frightened.

The waiter brought her drink. She asked him if M. Aristides was all alone here.

"Oh, madame, naturally, anyone so rich as Monsieur Aristides would never travel *alone*. He has here his valet and two secretaries and a chauffeur."

The waiter was quite shocked at the idea of Monsieur Aristides travelling unaccompanied.

Hilary noted, however, when she at last went into the dining-room, that the old man sat at a table by himself as he had done on the previous evening. At a table nearby sat two young men whom she thought were probably the secretaries. She noticed that one or the other of them was always on the alert and looked constantly towards the table where M. Aristides, shrivelled and monkey-like, ate his lunch and did not seem to notice their existence. Evidently, to M. Aristides, secretaries were not human.

The afternoon passed in a vague dreamlike manner. Hilary strolled through the gardens, descending from terrace to terrace. The peace and the beauty seemed quite astounding. There was the splash of water, the gleam of the golden oranges, and innumerable scents and fragrances. It was the Oriental atmosphere of seclusion about it that Hilary found so satisfying. *As a garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse. . . .* This was what a garden was meant to be, a place shut away from the world—full of green and gold.

If I could stay here, thought Hilary. If I could stay here always. . . .

It was not the actual garden of the Palais Jamaï that was in her thoughts, but the state of mind it typified. When she no longer looked for peace, she had found it. And peace of mind had come to her at a moment when she was committed to adventure and danger.

A little cold breeze sprang up and Hilary gave a quick shiver. It was late afternoon, and the sun had lost its power. Hilary went up the various terraces and into the hotel.

IN the gloom of the Oriental Lounge, something voluble and cheerful resolved itself, as Hilary's eyes got attuned to the dimness, into Mrs. Calvin Baker, her hair newly blued, and her appearance immaculate as ever.

"I've just got here by air," she explained. "I simply can't stand these trains—the time they take! And the people in them, as often as not, quite insanitary! They've no idea at all of hygiene in these countries. My dear, you should see the meat in the *souks*—all smothered in flies. Now tell me, have you been getting around? You've been doing the old city today, I expect?"

"I'm afraid I haven't 'done' anything," said Hilary, smiling. "I've just been sitting about in the sun."

"Ah, of course—you're just out of hospital. I forgot." Clearly only recent illness was accepted by Mrs. Calvin Baker as an excuse for failure to sightsee. "How could I be so stupid? Why, it's perfectly true, after concussion you ought to lie down and rest in a dark room most of the day. By and by we can make some expeditions together. I'm one of those people who like a real packed day—everything planned and arranged. Every minute filled."

In Hilary's present mood, this sounded like a foretaste of hell, but she congratulated Mrs. Calvin Baker on her energy

"Well, I will say that for a woman of my age I get around pretty well. I hardly ever feel fatigue. Do you remember Miss Hetherington at Casablanca? An Englishwoman with a long face. She'll be arriving this evening. She prefers trains to flying. Well, I must run along now and see about my room. I didn't like the one they gave me and they promised to change it."

A miniature whirlwind of energy, Mrs. Calvin Baker departed.

When Hilary entered the dining-room that evening, the first thing she saw was Miss Hetherington at a small table against the wall, eating her dinner with a book propped up in front of her.

The three ladies had coffee together after dinner and Mrs. Calvin Baker began making plans for the next day.

"I don't think I shall go to the old city," she said. "I did that very thoroughly last time. Most interesting and quite a labyrinth, if you know what I mean. So quaint and old world. If I hadn't had the guide with me, I don't think I should have found my


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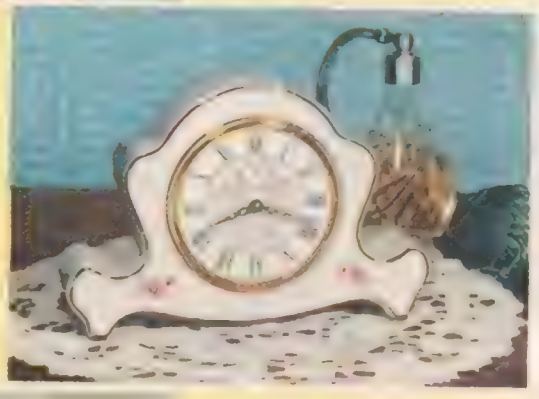
Compact, in smart ivory case with gold-colour trim, brown dial, or gun-metal, chrome trim, black dial. Fully luminous hands and numerals. Whisper-quiet tick. Two-toned alarm. **47/6.**

***FLEURETTE***
A clock with charm and character to delight every lady. Elegantly cased in Ceramic with dainty floral decoration. Whisper-quiet tick. Two-toned alarm. Only 4¼″ high. **69/6.**



***SPUR ALARM***
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Elegantly slim case in ivory, with brown dial, gold coloured trim, or black with nickel trim. Hands and figures fully luminous. **31/3.**

***WOODLAND***
Handsome occasional clock for desk, mantlepiece, or bedside table. Rich dark wood finish. Whisper-quiet tick. Two toned alarm. Only 4″ high. Felt pads protect polished surfaces. **69/6.**

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"What is the back door locked for?"

way back to the hotel. When we'd finished with the town, he took me up to a kind of eating house or tea-room, right up on the hillside looking down over the old city—a marvellous view. I had to drink that dreadful mint tea, of course, which is really very nasty. And they wanted me to buy various things, some quite nice, but some just rubbish. One has to be very firm, I find."

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Hetherington. She added rather wistfully, "And, of course, one can't really spare the money for souvenirs. These money restrictions are so worrying."

Hilary hoped to avoid having to see the old city of Fez in the depressing company of Miss Hetherington. Fortunately the latter was invited by Mrs. Baker to come with her on an expedition by car. Since Mrs. Baker made it clear that she was going to pay for the car, Miss Hetherington, whose travelling allowance was dwindling in an alarming manner, accepted with avidity. Hilary, after inquiry at the desk, was supplied with a guide, and set forth to see the city of Fez.

They started from the terrace, going down through the succession of terraced gardens until they reached an enormous door in the wall at the bottom. The guide produced a key of mammoth proportions, unlocked the door, which swung slowly open, and motioned Hilary to pass through.

It was like stepping into another world. All about her were the walls of Old Fez. Narrow winding streets, high walls, and occasionally, through a doorway, a glimpse of an interior or a courtyard, and moving all around her were laden donkeys, men with their burdens, boys, women veiled and unveiled—the whole busy secret life of this Moorish city.

WANDERING through the narrow streets, she forgot everything, her mission, the past tragedy of her life, even herself. She was all eyes and ears, living and walking in a dream world. The only annoyance was the guide, who talked unceasingly and urged her into various establishments into which she had no particular wish to go.

"You look, lady. This man have very nice things, very cheap, really old, really Moorish. He have gowns and silks. You like very nice beads?"

The eternal commerce of East selling to West went on, but it hardly disturbed the charm for Hilary. She soon lost all sense of place or direction. Here within this walled city she had little idea of whether she was walking north or south or whether she was retracing her steps over the same streets through which she had already passed. She was quite exhausted when the guide made his final suggestion, which was evidently part of the routine.

"I take you very nice house, now, very superior. Friends of mine. You have mint tea there and they show you plenty lovely things."

Hilary recognized the well-known gambit which Mrs. Calvin Baker had described. However, she was willing to see, or be taken to see, anything that was suggested. Tomorrow, she promised herself, she would come into the old city alone and wander around without a guide chattering by her elbow.

So she allowed herself to be guided through a gateway and up a winding path climbing up more or less outside the city walls. They arrived at last at a garden surrounding an attractive house built in native style.

HERE, in a big room with a fine view over the city, she was urged to sit down at a small coffee table. In due course glasses of mint tea were brought. To Hilary, who did not like sugar with her tea, it was somewhat of an ordeal to drink it. But by banishing the idea of tea from her mind, and merely thinking of it as a new kind of lemonade, she managed almost to enjoy it.

She enjoyed, too, being shown rugs and beads and draperies, embroideries, and various other things, and made one or two small purchases, more out of good manners than for any other reason.

The indefatigable guide then said, "I have car ready now and take you very nice short drive. One hour, not more, see very beautiful scenery and country. And then back to hotel." He added, assuming a suitably discreet expression, "This girl here, she take you first to very nice ladies' toilet."

The girl who had served the tea was standing by them smiling, and said at once in careful English, "Yes, yes, madame. You come with me. We have very fine toilet, oh very fine. Just like the Ritz Hotel. Same as in New York or Chicago. You see!"

Smiling a little, Hilary followed the girl. The toilet hardly rose to the heights claimed for it, but it did at least have running water. There was a wash basin and a small cracked mirror which had such distorting proportions that Hilary almost shrank back in alarm at the sight of her own face. When she had washed and dried her hands, which she did on her own handkerchief, not much caring for the appearance of the towel, she turned to leave.

In some way, however, the door of the toilet appeared to have stuck. She turned and rattled the handle unavailingly. It would not move. Hilary wondered whether it had been bolted or locked from the outside. She grew angry. What was the idea of shutting her in here? Then she noticed that there was another door in a corner of the room. Going to it, she turned the handle. This time the door opened easily enough. She passed through.

She found herself in a small eastern-looking room with light that came only from slits high up in the wall. Sitting there on a low divan, smoking, was the little Frenchman she had met in the train, M. Henri Laurier.

*To be continued next week*

## MY LEFT FOOT

*Continued from page 14*

normal person might feel if his hands were tied behind his back.

As time went on I began to depend more and more on my left foot for everything. It was my main means of communication, of making myself understood to the family. Very slowly it became indispensable to me. With it I learned to break down some of the barriers that stood between me and the others at home. It was the only key to the door of the prison I was in.

It was my habit, when I had written something down on the floor, to spit on it, rub it out with my heel, and then to write it down again from memory as I did when Mother was teaching me. One day, when I was about six and a half, a local doctor came to visit my brother, who had sprained his wrist. After coming downstairs the doctor saw me writing on the floor with some chalk between my toes.

### Mother Had To Blush

He was incredulous. He began to ask Mother questions about me and, being anxious to show him that I understood all that was being said, she put me up on the table and invited him to ask me to write something for him. He thought for a moment, then he took out his big report ledger from his bag, offered me a big red pencil and asked me to write my name in the book.

I took the pencil between my toes, pulled the book towards me, steadied myself, and slowly wrote my name on the flyleaf in big block-letter capitals.

"Amazing! I'm astonished, Mrs. Brown. It really is——" he began. Then he stopped in surprise, and Mother blushed in confusion, for, after hesitating a bit, I had spat very deliberately on the page and was trying vigorously to erase what I had written, not understanding why the pencilled letters would not come off as easily as chalked ones!

The doctor brushed my mother's apologies aside with a laugh, patted me on the head and told me I was a great chap. He visited me often after that and followed my progress keenly.

Meanwhile the family was multiplying steadily. The steps of stairs were mounting higher and higher. I was growing, too. My body was filling out and becoming bigger, and so was my mind. Mother found I had already passed beyond the A B C stage and almost beyond her teaching powers, too. I wasn't content any more just to sit and listen while Mother read aloud to me. I was restless to be able to read myself, like Mona or Peter, who was a year younger than me.

### Couldn't Go To School

I was also anxious to show them that what they could do I could do, too. I began to use a pencil now instead of the chalk, although I could never get used to a pen. I once tried to write my names with my father's best fountain pen while a couple of neighbours stood round in expectation. But, to Mother's embarrassment, I flung the pen away in disgust when I found it would do nothing but stick in the paper every time I tried to write.

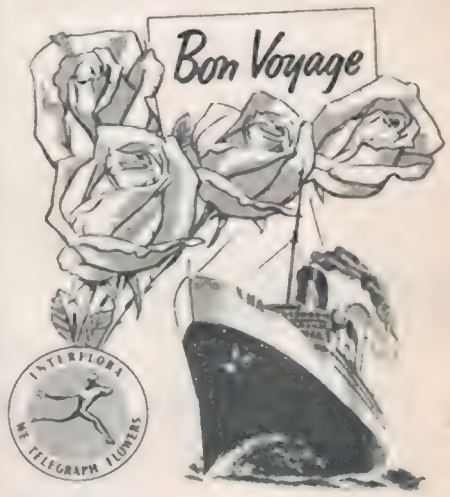
My mother, knowing that it was impossible for me to go to school like the others, was worried as to how she could best aid me in that way, for, although she was satisfied now that my mental state was quite normal, she feared that I would grow up to be illiterate and therefore at a great disadvantage intellectually as well as physically.

This fear was with her almost continually. It tormented her. It wasn't because of any sense of shame at the

## WHO'S WHO?

**B C E H are the clues on page 55 which help to identify the woman on the left as Ava Gardner, star of the film "One Touch of Venus."**

**A D F G identify the woman on the right as Queen Soraya of Persia, once briefly exiled from her country.**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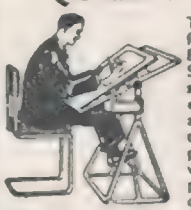

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prospect of having an illiterate as well as a crippled son. She thought only of the material drawback it would mean to me when I got older. She wanted above all to make me equal with my sisters and brothers in every way possible, and, as I could not go to school, she did all she could to lessen the consequences of that disadvantage herself.

But she hadn't much time or chance to do this daily, for she already had her hands full, struggling to carry us all through times of unemployment, illnesses and many other worries. She found it difficult to smile at times, though somehow or other she always managed to do so.

### A Great Scholar

When Mother was busy I worked on by myself, trying to make out new words whenever I came across them. I used to try to spell out the names of the objects around me at home, like fire, picture, dog, door, chair, and so on. I was very proud of myself when I had mastered a new word and could write it down for Mother to show her what a great scholar I was.

One day I had been trying particularly hard to master a new word that I had come upon in Peter's schoolbook. At last I got it and turned to Mother, who was sitting in a chair by the fire nursing my baby brother. It was evening, the dying April light made a pattern on the floor and shone on the polished top of the little mahogany table, showing up the crack that zig-zagged across its surface. Tea hadn't started yet, and all the others were upstairs playing a game.

I sat crouched in a corner of the sofa, Peter's book before me and a pencil in my left foot. Many times that day I had looked over appealingly to where Mother sat, despairing of making this word out by myself. But, seeing her rocking gently in the chair, holding the baby closely against her breast, I had turned my face away again, feeling in a vague sort of way that somehow or other I must work this one word for myself without my mother's help.

A few minutes later I gave a big whoop of triumph that made Mother start and the baby stir uneasily in her arms. "What is it, Chris?" she asked me. "You'll waken the baby."

But I didn't care. In my own queer, grunting way I told her to come over to me at once.

"A new word, is it?" she said as she came across and sat down on the edge of the sofa, the baby asleep in her arms.

### The New Word

I grinned and, taking up the pencil, wrote down the word which had puzzled me for so long. When it was done I looked up into her face for her approval, and saw she was staring silently at what I had written on the margin of the page. She remained so still and thoughtful for so long that I became anxious and nudged her with my foot. She turned, placed her hand upon me and smiled.

The new word which I had learned to write for the first time was—M-O-T-H-E-R.

It was when I was about seven years old that I began to associate with children of my own age through the help of my brothers. They took me with them when they went out to play in the streets after school, pushing me along in a rusty old go-car which they called my "chariot."

Some of the best years of my life were passed in that battered old crock with the twisted handle and crooked wheels, which creaked and groaned as they raced me along in it through lamp-lit streets and down dark murky alleys in the bright warm twilight of a June evening or the cold greyness of a December night.

Very soon I, too, had pals with whom I had lots of fun. These were boys from our own neighbourhood who were young enough and frank enough to accept me as one of themselves without asking any questions. They had grown up with me, and in a way they found it easier to associate with me than would other boys who had never seen or been with me before. Indeed, many of them regarded my affliction as some queer sort of symbol of superiority, almost of godliness, so that they treated me with deference, respect, in a strange childish way.

I had now improved so much that I could sit up in the go-car without having any pillows behind my back to support me. I took many a fall on those rides, when the car would topple over as they pushed it round a bend at full speed. But I grew to be quite hardy in this way and became adept at falling in such a manner that all I ever got, even from a bad fall, was a bruising and a scrape or two. I got a huge thrill out of it all.

### Fight At The Table

In our house the great thing was food. To us children, meal-times never came too soon. We'd all wait patiently till Mother laid the table, then we'd make a bee-line for it, I scrambling between them on my bottom and usually managing to get there first by throwing myself across a chair to show it was engaged till some of the bigger ones would lift me on to it.

Then the fight began—to see which one of us would out-do the rest in eating. We cared very little about the drinking part of the proceedings. Our chief aim was to stuff ourselves with as much bread and butter as we could manage to consume without actually bursting.

I couldn't feed myself, of course, but that didn't stop me from taking a very active part in those table contests. My mother or father would sit by me and feed me. Their hands often became tired from the simple process of lifting the bread and putting it into my mouth.

"Might as well be trying to fill the River Liffey!" Father would complain, reaching out for the bread plate for the seventh or eighth time.

Then, after tea, if we decided not to go out, we would get together and have a game of hide-and-seek, or maybe blind man's buff. On such occasions, Father, seeing what was afoot, would immediately get up from his chair, throw his newspaper down, put on his coat and hat, and tell Mother as he went out of the door: "I'll be back when they're all in bed!"

There would be the throw of a half-penny and a shout of "Heads or tails?" to decide which one of us was to be the "blind man." Someone would get an old scarf or woollen sock, tie it over the eyes of whoever had been chosen, and the game would be on. Everyone would run about the

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"Look, Daddy, there's an apron exactly like yours!"

blindfolded figure, laughing while he sought blindly to catch hold of a flying arm or wriggling leg, and all the time he would be bulleted around the room by "friendly" pats and shoves. It wasn't a very gentle game.

Sometimes the part of the "blind man" would fall to me. They'd tie a scarf around my eyes, wait a second till they had got themselves places, and then shout "ready!"

I would pause a moment, waiting to catch the least sound of an intaken breath or giggle that would indicate where someone was hiding. Then, very cautiously, I'd crawl in the direction of the sound, pushing myself along on my behind till I had reached the spot. Then out I'd shoot my left foot, toes tensed to catch the leg of Peter's trousers or the hem of Mona's frock. When I caught someone I'd drag them towards me and wrap my legs around them till they shouted or, more often, gasped: "I—give in!"

### They All Wore Masks

Once, on Hallowe'en night when I was about eight, we brought in a few of our pals to have a little party while Father and Mother were out. We had the whole house to ourselves that night, and we needed it, for there was quite a crowd of us. My three sisters had brought along some of their companions as well, so that there were seven girls and about double that number of boys, all dressed up in weird costumes and fearsome masks. We made short work of the apples and nuts and all the rest. Then we played a game of hide-and-seek.

I was going to be clever, for I had overheard one of the girls, a plump little creature of twelve called Sally, with red cheeks and a mass of tawny curls, tell Mona that she was going to hide in the big bath in the pantry, where no one would dream of looking because they'd think it was full of water, as was usually the case. That night, however, the bath was empty, and Sally was sure she had found the ideal hiding-place.

I crawled as quickly as I could into the dark pantry before Sally got there and concealed myself right underneath the big enamel bath. There was lots of old rubbish stuck there, like old boots, clothes, beer bottles and so on, and every time I moved, the end of an old umbrella would poke into my ribs. But I managed to endure it, and a few minutes later I heard someone enter the pantry and come towards the bath.

I peeped out and from the patch of light coming through the slit in the door from the kitchen inside, I saw the lower half of two thin white legs with sandals covering the feet. I knew it was Sally.

I heard her climb into the bath, but she didn't pull the lid down on herself as I thought she would, and I thought what a fool she must be, for if anyone came in she'd be easily seen, even in the dark, for she had a white frock on.

A few minutes later someone did come in, and from the sound of hob-nailed boots on the concrete floor I knew it was one of the boys. I had been waiting for this and it was my plan to yell out so they'd come and catch Sally before she'd time to get away. I took a breath, preparing to shout, but next moment the hob-nailed boots strode across to the bath and a voice, which I recognized as that of Charlie, one of our pals, spoke in a whisper.

"Sally—are you there?" it said.

"Charlie? Yes, I'm waiting." Sally instantly replied. Then she added cautiously: "Don't make a noise."

"I won't," he said. Then he hoisted himself over the edge of the bath and dropped into it. Next I heard the lid being closed.

I crawled out from my hiding-spot, feeling a crick in my neck, and sat at the side of the bath, listening. From within there came sounds of giggling and smothered laughter. I crawled closer and put my ear to where there was a division in the lid.

"Love me?" I heard Sally ask, followed by a giggle.

"Course," Charlie replied, matter-of-factly, and this in turn was followed by the sound of a very loud kiss. I turned away in disgust, because I felt sure that Charlie was a sissy to stay with a girl rather than with the other boys. I was creeping away towards the door when I thought of something.

### Surprise For Sally

I smiled to myself in the dark as I crawled back to the bath. As noiselessly as I could, I lifted myself up by the side of it and leaned over as close as possible to the two water taps. I made some noise, but the couple inside seemed to be too engrossed to hear it.

I couldn't use my hands, and I couldn't use my feet either in the position I was in. So I stretched forward more and, pressing my forehead against one of the taps, slowly twisted the handle round with my head, though it hurt me a lot. Next moment, the water was gushing into the bath.

I dropped down and made for the door, crawling as quickly as a spider. From behind I heard the lid of the bath being flung up and poor Sally screaming: "Mammy! Mammy!" as she and Charlie scrambled out. Just in time I slipped through the door and into the kitchen before they had got the water out of their eyes.

Neither Sally nor Charlie ever came to our house after that.

Christmas was always a jolly time with us, even if at times we hadn't

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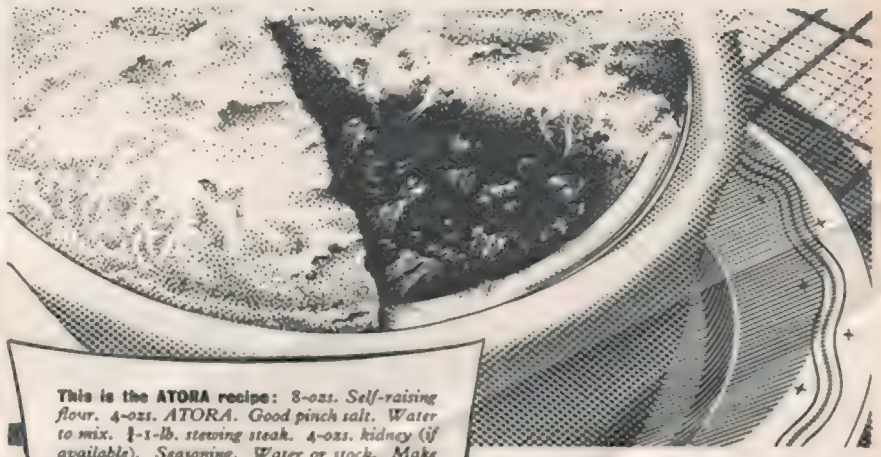

**This is the ATORA recipe:** *8-ozs. Self-raising flour. 4-ozs. ATORA. Good pinch salt. Water to mix. 1-1-lb. stewing steak. 4-ozs. kidney (if available). Seasoning. Water or stock. Make suet crust by mixing all dry ingredients and adding enough water to make a firm paste. Line greased basin with pastry, retaining enough for cover. Cut meat and kidney into small pieces, and fill basin, sprinkling each layer with flour, salt and pepper. Add water or stock to nearly fill basin and put on lid. Seal edges of pastry well, cover with greased paper and cloth, or just cloth dipped in boiling water and floured. Steam for 4 hours, and serve with thickened gravy.*

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much to celebrate it with. Still, no matter how little money there was in the house, Santa always came with little gifts wrapped in a lot of brightly coloured paper—to make them look big and exciting.

We often had to unroll sheet after sheet of paper before we'd discover the small toy that lay inside, cheap, plain little things bought in cheap, plain little shops tucked away in side streets and stuffy little corners of Dublin. But these presents meant more to us, lying there on our pillows on Christmas morning, than the most expensive set of trains or toy motor-cars.

The night before, every one of the children would be put to bed early in the evening, except me. Mother had managed to get a radio, paying half a crown a week for it, and every Christmas Eve I would be allowed to stay up and hear High Mass at midnight coming from the Holy Ghost Fathers in Kimmage Manor, because I wasn't able to go to Mass like the others.

### Favourite Story

My mother tried hard to make me interested in the catechism as I got older, but it never appealed to me as much as the stories about King Lir and his swan-children. When Mother told me how God made the world in seven days, I took it for granted without asking any questions about it. But when she told me the story of Lir I must have asked her a dozen questions about how the children were turned into swans and why their stepmother did it and so on. I thought it was a better story altogether.

When Tony told me that God had built everything in the world, I called him a liar, because I had heard my father say that only bricklayers could build houses, and I knew God wasn't a bricklayer.

Tony was a wild kid. He was always getting into trouble at home and outside. He was a bit of a Romeo. He had all the girls in the neighbourhood running after him, though he didn't care a rap for any of them.

He was the handsomest of us all, a tall, sallow-faced young fellow, very strong, very quick tempered, with curly black hair, big hands and white teeth that flashed when he smiled or laughed. Everyone at home was a little in awe of him.

I helped him once out of a tight fix. Tony was about thirteen then, and he was my first hero. He and a pal fell out over something and they bashed each other round till Tony put his chum down for the count. Then somebody squealed about it to Father, and Tony was biffed very soundly and locked in the back bedroom for a week.

### Father Was Stern

The next night was Hallowe'en. All the "gang" had saved up to buy fireworks, and everyone was going to have a good time. But my father was stern. Tony must stay at home and "learn his lesson." That was that.

Poor Tony was desperate. None of the others at home would help him. "If only I had the blinking key," he groaned from behind the bedroom door. But the others wouldn't listen to him.

I was mad at them. I wanted to help Tony, just to show them that I had some pluck. I didn't exactly know what I could do, but I knew that Mother had the key in her apron pocket.

How to get it out was my problem.

Then I had an idea. I didn't like it. But it was the only way.

I crawled over to Mother, who was sitting on the sofa sewing my father's overalls, and laid my head on her lap with a great sad sigh. She looked up surprised, for this wasn't like me. I hated being pampered.

"What is it—tired?" she said, laying down her needle and thread. I nodded very wanly, and she stooped and lifted me up into her lap.

"We'll sing you a song to make the sandman come," she said. Then she started to sing softly some old Irish ballad.

I shut my eyes and in a few minutes I was snoring very convincingly. Then cautiously I moved my left foot closer to Mother's apron pocket, stopped, and moved it again so that this time it was actually inside the pocket.

I began to explore its contents carefully. There were all sorts of odds and ends in it—like scissors, buttons and spools of thread. I was just going to give up when suddenly my toes touched something cold and steely and I knew it was the key. I fastened my toes around it and slowly wriggled my foot out of Mother's pocket, clutching the key tightly. I did it all so quietly and carefully that Mother never suspected anything.

After a while she put me down gently on the sofa, throwing an old coat over me to keep me warm. Then, still humming softly to herself, she went into the pantry to prepare dinner.

The moment she left the kitchen I flung the coat off me, slipped from the sofa and crawled to the door as quickly as I could. Luckily it was open, so I got out into the hall and pulled myself up the stairs backwards like a crab and reached the landing.

I kicked on the bedroom door with my left foot. My brother's voice, sounding very suspicious, spoke from within. "Who's there?" I managed to make him understand it was me.

"What do you want?" he asked.

I grunted that I had the key. Immediately there was a scramble from inside the room and next moment Tony and I were crouched down on each side of the door, looking at each other through the slit.

"Good! Can you slide it under the door?" said Tony, speaking in a whisper. I tried to, but the slit wasn't wide enough to let the key pass through. It got stuck halfway!

"I'll make it!" said my brother grimly. Then he took his penknife from his pocket and began to scrape some of the wood off the bottom of the door till it was a good half-inch wider.

### The Lock Turned

"Try now!" he said to me. I pushed the key in again and this time it slid under smoothly. "Great stuff!" he exclaimed. I heard him get up from the floor and in a few seconds the lock was turned and Tony stepped out on to the landing, a big grin on his face.

He bent and pulled my ear. "You're a brick, Chris," he said. "Better than the lot of 'em!" Then he ran down the stairs like a sprinter, paused at the bottom to wave and grin back at me, and noiselessly went out.

I clambered down the stairs, crept into the kitchen and crawled back on to the sofa while Mother was still busy in the scullery cooking the dinner. She never missed the key.

"What's happened to the door?" Father asked angrily later, looking at the spot where Tony had pared it.

"Mice," said Tony, as he knelt down to say his prayers.

At eight years old the old go-car was still my chariot, and I went about in it like any royal king. It was an ugly, battered old thing that nobody ever treated well. It was always being kicked, knocked over, shoved about and trampled on. Everybody joked about it. But to me it was something lovable, almost human. It seemed to have some queer dignity of its own that nobody but I could appreciate. I called it Henry.

### Under The Lamplight

I had seen my first glimpse of outdoor life sitting on its seat with the feathers sticking out of it. I can remember the wet wind on my face that day as they raced me along through busy streets. I can remember sitting in it as my brothers sat playing cards with their pals under a street lamp on a dark winter night, when the gutters on the road were running with water and the lamplight was reflected in them so that they looked like little rivers of gold in the dark.

Old Henry was my throne. On it I tasted adventure and excitement with the others. They took me with them everywhere, even to the local cinema every weekend. I would go in perched on the back of my big brother, Jim. I noticed how the other kids would stare at me and how Jim would tell them to "scram," but I didn't think about it because I didn't see why I shouldn't be

"What's wrong with . . ." J. G. FARRIS

perched on my brother's back. I had always gone about on somebody's back ever since I could remember.

One time when we were at a movie Peter and some of our pals tried to get me to smoke. They were experimenting themselves with a packet of cigarettes Peter had pinched from Father's pocket. But when they stuck a cigarette in my mouth, I immediately began to chew it and had the whole thing eaten before they'd time to light it. Peter looked at me horrified, expecting me to turn green or else start belching tobacco. But I just grinned and opened my mouth for more.

### Day In The Park

Summer came. The poor little row of forget-me-nots along the wall came out bravely, their tiny star-like blossoms all blue and white and speckled red. The big tree in our neighbour's garden was covered with leaves of light green, and the moss clinging to its bark looked moist and shone with little gems of dew that sparkled in the sunlight. Outside on the streets the flies swarmed and buzzed over the garbage bins and flickered about the heads of dogs sleeping on the doorsteps.

It was too hot and sweaty for the cinema. So my brothers gave old Henry a spring cleaning and took me for long "walks" out into the suburbs of Dublin. Or perhaps, on Sundays, they'd take me up into the Phoenix Park, where we'd spend the day lying on the grass and then go down into Donnelly's Hollow and light a fire and make tea in a rusty old billycan, while munching sandwiches and telling stories about things that never happened, till it was shadowy and time to go home.

It was all great fun, going on these little outings. People would sometimes stop and stare at me as my brothers wheeled me along, but I didn't worry about it because I had no idea why they stared. Perhaps I had an idea lurking at the back of my mind that there was something wrong somewhere, something about me that made people look at me in that funny way as they passed. But it was a strange idea and it frightened me, so that I tried not to think about it at all. I just wanted to be happy. And my brothers saw to it that I was happy.

I remember a little trip we took out into the country beyond Dublin one day when I was about eight and a half. We set out at about ten on a bright warm Sunday morning in September. Old Henry had been specially oiled and polished up the night before and in consequence he was groaning a little less fiercely this morning. Peter stuffed his schoolbag with sandwiches and a ninepenny bottle of sauce. Two bottles of milk were pushed beneath the cushion of my car, and bruised my behind every time the go-car jolted. There were five of us—two of my brothers, two pals and myself.

A few hours later we were camped on the bank of a mountain stream. I sat on the edge of the bank, fascinated as I looked down into the sun-flecked water and saw the little forms of fish flitting like shadows in and out between the waving green moss on the bottom.

A bunch of these little silvery creatures gathered right below me round a slanting shelf of rock. Quickly I kicked off one of my sandals and thrust my left foot into the water, thinking I might catch one of them between my toes. But I was ignorant of the habits of fish, and they darted away in a flurry of streaks and ripples to the opposite bank, well beyond the reach of my foot.

We had a fine day. Paddy became friendly with a cow from a nearby field, a big, fat, brown animal with sleepy eyes and an enormous tail that coiled about its hind legs like a rope.

"I'm going to milk it!" he told us, and we all laughed at him. But he coaxed the old cow with endearments whispered into her ear and finally got her standing still. He sat down on a tree stump, placed the billycan under her, and grinned at us. "Now watch!" he said.

### Sent Him Sprawling

We watched, but the moment he reached out and put his hand on the cow's udder she lashed out indignantly with one of her hind legs and sent him sprawling over on to his back. Then she ambled away, her tail swishing.

"That one's a lady, anyway!" said Paddy. We roared.

The next day, Tony and Jim took me along to watch them swim in the canal not very far from our house. The day was very warm and sultry. There was hardly any sunshine, just a heavy, oppressive warmness.

We got to the canal and found there was a big crowd of children gathered there, some swimming in the water, some—mostly girls—paddling in the shallow part, holding their skirts and pinafores up high above their knees. The air was filled with the sounds of laughter and screams as they splashed about in the water, covering the roadside with spray. There was quite a crowd of spectators on the bridge.

My two brothers placed me at a point where I could see all that went on. Then they stripped themselves

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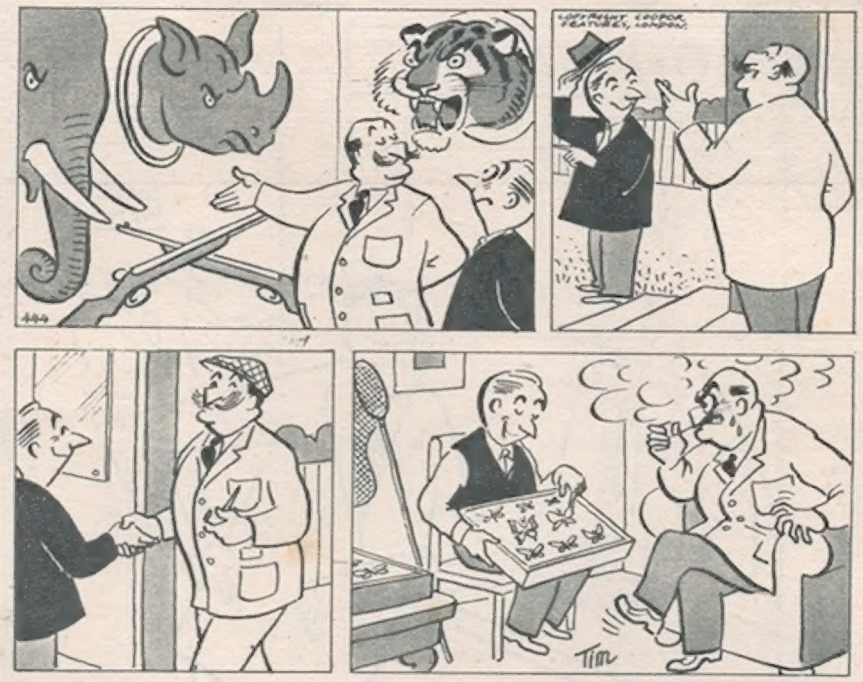
## *OH, JOHNNY!* — *by TIM*




under the bridge, changed into togs and took a dive into the water. I looked on, amid all the noise and excitement, feeling hot, sticky, and a little jealous. I wanted to tear off my clothes and plunge into the water as my brothers had done.

Suddenly I felt the same way then as I had felt on that day when I first drew the letter "A"—a queer eagerness, an unconscious determination to do what the others were doing, to feel what they felt and know what they knew. I wanted more than anything else just then to go into the water, and try to swim.

A little while later Tony climbed out on to the bank, his body glistening and his hair clinging to his forehead. I gave a yell, and he came up to me. In my own queer grunting language I told him I wanted to have a swim.

"G'wan—you're kidding me!" he said laughing. I insisted. "But you'd drown!" he told me.

Nothing Tony said could make me less resolved to go into the water. "All right, then," he said. But when my eldest brother, Jim, heard, he said he'd have nothing to do with it. He wouldn't even help Tony to strip me and put togs on me.

"Give me your togs, then," Tony demanded. "He can't go in in his pelt!"

He brought me behind a bush in a quiet part of the canal and there undressed me. Jim was very big and fat and his togs were miles too large for me. Tony had to wrap them round me a few times and pin them at the back before they'd stay on. Finally, however, he got me ready and carried me down to the bank.

He stopped and looked at me. "Still want to go in?" he asked. "You won't mind if you go under and don't come up, will you?"

I grinned and shook my head. Maybe I was afraid, but I was also stubborn, too stubborn to give in now. Poor Jim stood by trembling. "Don't do it—you'll kill him!" he said, but we took no notice of him.

### Said A Prayer

Tony pulled a branch off a tree, dipped it into the water and waved it over my head, saying an "Our Father" over me. Then he caught me under the arms, hoisted me up a little and swung me into the canal!

I gasped as I felt the cold, icy water rush over me. My brain became confused; everything melted into a watery blur. I was beneath the water for a second, rose, went under again, rose once more and expected to go under for a third time.

But I didn't. Instead, I lashed out frantically with my feet, and next thing I knew I was simply floating along like one of the white swans farther up the river. I kept kicking my feet out vigorously and remained sailing on top of the water. I heard a burst of laughter coming from the bank and a few moments later Tony swam up beside me. He held my arm and steered me towards the towpath, where Jim hauled me ashore. I lay there panting but triumphant.

"You'd lick Christopher Columbus any day!" said Tony, as he knelt down and dried me.

That was my first swim. It wasn't my last, for I had many another in a little rocky stream which we discovered one summer in a wood. Often, I would lie on the bank while the others were swimming or picking blackberries. Sometimes I would fall asleep there. I was happy. I looked out on the world noticing everything except myself.

### End Of The Go-car

Then one day my go-car broke down. The axle snapped, the seat collapsed and nobody could do anything with it. It was put away in the coal-house to rust.

I was lost without it. My brothers could no longer bring me with them when they went out to play. Mother talked about getting me a new car when Father went back to work, but I hardly heard her; I was bewildered.

It wasn't just that I missed the old car so much. It was the way I felt when I could no longer go out with my brothers. Everything was changed. I was thrown upon myself at last. That queer idea that there was something wrong, which had entered my mind sometimes before, now loomed larger.

A few days later I was sitting in the front garden playing toy soldiers with my brothers when along came some of our pals, carrying fishing-nets and jam-jars on a string. They suggested we should all go fishing together. It was a good day and nobody wanted to stay at home. There was a rush for fishing-rods and tackle and everybody was excited. Peter laid a bet that he would catch twenty pinkeens before the day was out.

They all crowded at the gate, ready to go. Then Tony forgot something and came back for it along with a pal. As he was going down the path again I looked up at him dumbly, appealing silently.

He stopped. "Sorry, Chris," he said, not looking at me. "We'll bring you back lots of pinkeens." He moved away quickly.

"Pity about him——" began his companion. Tony gave him a violent shove that knocked him into the road. They ran on to join the others.

I was left alone in the garden. I looked down at my hands twisting and twisting.

***NEXT WEEK: I learn to paint. "My Left Foot," by Christy Brown, will be published as a book by Secker and Warburg, on October 23, at 9s. 6d.***

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To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example* first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

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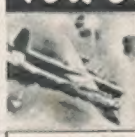

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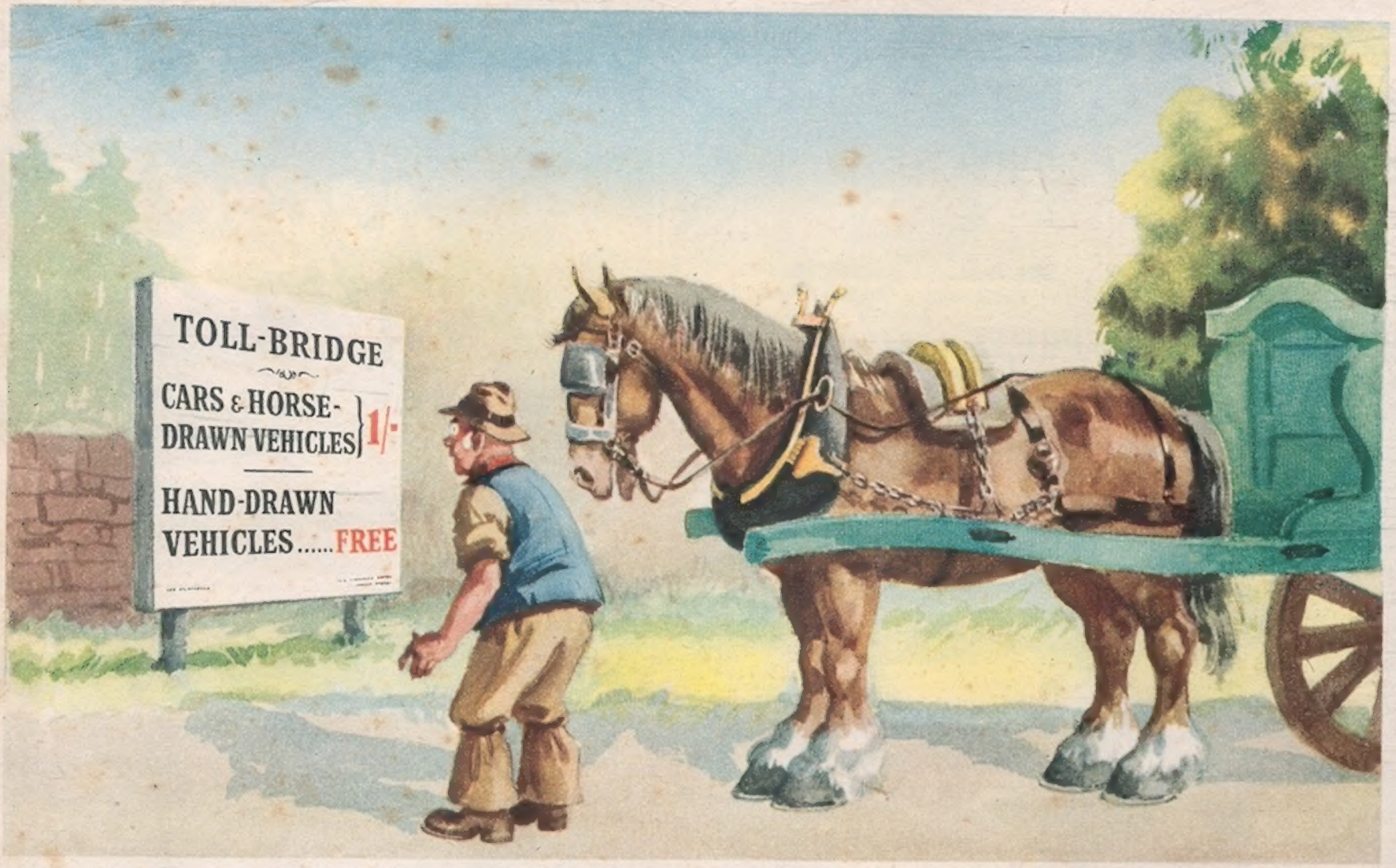

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